

# Discipleship 101

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*13 lessons in basic Christianity*

*Including in-class discussion and materials for personal study*

*Know Jesus* Grace Evangelical Free Church  
Louisville, KY  
2011

*Grow in Jesus*

*Go with Jesus*

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# Lesson 1 – It's All About Jesus

**Big Idea:** *Our ultimate purpose is to magnify the supremacy of Christ:* a.k.a. It's not about me.

**Objectives:** as a result of this lesson, students will...

- Know – God is most glorified when we most enjoy Him
- Feel – motivated to find their joy in God alone
- Choose – to make a sacrifice showing that Jesus comes first

## **Introduction: What is the meaning of life?**

Everyone wrestles with this question, and there is no simple, easy answer. Trying to find meaning and purpose in the short years we have on earth has puzzled philosophers and the common man for millennia.

### ➤ **What are some common explanations for the meaning of life?**

Explanation	Worldview
Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die	Hedonism
There is no point	Fatalism
This life is all there is	Materialism
Let's make the world a better place	Utilitarianism
The physical realm is evil, so live for the spiritual	Gnosticism
Your actions affect you now and in your next life	Hinduism (Karma)
Do good things to earn salvation	Religion-ism

### ➤ **How would you express the Christian view of the meaning of life?**

## **Discussion: What is the meaning of worship?**

In the 1640s, following the Reformation, the Westminster Catechism was written, stating: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." Not a bad statement of the meaning of life. John Piper adapted that to, "The chief end of man is to glorify God **by** enjoying him forever."

- **Why did Piper make that change?** Why does our enjoyment of God glorify him more than anything else?
- **Explain this quote: "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him."**

What is the best way to honor or praise someone? Words? Sacrificial gifts? Music? Public declarations? Isn't the best way to honor someone much more relational? Sure, when a war hero comes home he appreciates the band, the flowers, the big celebration... But what he really wants is time with his family, the love and attention of his wife and children. And nobody wants empty devotion – words without heart, praise without delight. No wife wants a gift or a note just because "I have to." There is a sort of honor in dutiful obligation, but it is not the highest kind. The highest form of worship is delight: enjoyment, pleasure, satisfaction.

- **What do people delight in today?** What brings people the greatest joy and satisfaction in life? [Money, things, physical pleasure, activities, success, fame, friends, fun, education, knowledge, children, work...]
- **Would you say that seeking enjoyment in these things can become a form of worship? How?**

Ultimately life comes down to a simple choice: to live for myself or to live for God. I can make it seem like I'm living for other people by pursuing a "helping profession" or being a family man, but the truth is that I am seeking my own greatest happiness and satisfaction – and work and family appear to be the best means to that end. Whatever I give myself to, however I seek satisfaction and fulfillment, that is my form of worship.

### **Bible Focus: Psalm 63**

Read the Psalm. Circle in your Bible or write on this page the verbs David uses to describe his pursuit of God (e.g. v. 1 – "I seek you; my soul thirsts for you..."). [Seek, thirsts, longs, seen, beheld, glorify, praise, lift up, be satisfied, praise, remember, think, sing, clings, rejoice, praise.]

- **How would you feel if your spouse / boyfriend used those words directed at you?** "I seek you, thirst for you, think of you, praise you, remember you, rejoice in you..." That's good poetry, right? Passionate stuff!
- **What is the context of this psalm?** When was David writing this? During a happy, prosperous time in his reign as king? [The title of the Psalm says, "while in the desert of Judah" which probably refers to 1 Samuel 23, when he was hiding from King Saul in the Desert of Ziph (mountainous eastern Judah), and then fled to the stronghold of En Gedi near the Dead Sea.]

At one of the lowest points of his life, David wrote this poem to express his heart's desire to rejoice in the LORD. He wanted to find his delight and satisfaction in God alone, recognizing that what the world offers is a barren wasteland of treachery and suffering. On the other hand, he did dabble in the pleasures of this world – and his son, Solomon, plunged headlong into everything his eyes could see to desire. But he found it all empty – like chasing after the wind (Eccl. 2:10-11).

God made it very clear in the Law what He wanted from his people: love (Deut. 6:4-6). And He was very specific about what love meant: an inward devotion that led to outward obedience. The external acts – like sacrifices, fasting and ritual worship – were worthless in God's sight when they did not flow from the delight of the heart (Zech. 7:5-6,12). And Jesus reiterated that the Law of Love remains the Greatest Command (Matt. 22:37-38).

So what is the meaning of life? It's all about Jesus! It's all about worshipping God, glorifying Him BY enjoying him, loving him, delighting in him with all of our hearts.

### **DEFINITION of Worship: to magnify the supremacy of Christ.**

This is our ultimate purpose: to magnify the supremacy of Christ. Our devotion to God and delight in Him does not add to his glory – and it is in no way something he needs. All we can do is to magnify the truth of God's majesty and goodness: to make His glory a larger reality in our own hearts and thereby make it more visible to those around us. And what we are drawing attention to is the supremacy of Christ – the fact that He is supreme over everything else in this universe (Col. 1:15-20).

Jesus Christ, as the full expression of God, embodies all the glory, wonder, beauty and wisdom of the Godhead. And we have the unbelievable privilege of having a personal relationship with this very Jesus! We do not need to make an appointment or sit on hold with a secretary – He, himself, is waiting to spend time with us!

### **Application: How can we magnify the supremacy of Christ this week?**

- **What are ways we tend to demonstrate the supremacy (in our hearts and minds) of things other than Christ?** [We let work, play or other things fill up our lives so there is "not time left" to know Jesus, grow in Jesus or go with Jesus...]

- **How can you show your heart's desire to delight in the LORD this week?** [Make him my number one priority! Build my schedule around Him and His values...]
- **What is one thing that you would normally do that you could give up this week to show that Jesus is the chief delight of your heart?** [Maybe a TV show, football game, extra hours at work, a hobby or activity...]
- **Pray for one another to be captured by a vision of the glory of the LORD!**

#### **Scripture Memory Challenge - Psalm 63:1-5**

This week, read over this Psalm a few times. Meditate on the truth of these words, let them sink deep into your heart and become your personal prayer. Then try to memorize some or all of the Psalm (e.g. vv. 1-5). Memorizing God's Word helps us better understand key passages and apply them to our hearts and lives. Throughout this course there will be opportunities to memorize key verses and passages related to significant principles and learning points for growing disciples.

## **Personal Study 1 – It's All About Jesus**

All kinds of things crowd into our lives, crying for our attention and devotion: people, education, work, hobbies, sports, recreation, health and fitness, etc. All of these examples are good things, that can become idols in our hearts if they become the main thing we are committed to. There are also bad things – temptations and sins that become addictions and strongholds that can consume even believers for years and years. It is one thing to know that the meaning of life is to glorify God – that it's all about Jesus. It is quite another thing to honestly and fully give Him supremacy in your heart and life. And the reality is that it's a lifelong process and a daily choice to bow, submitting my desires to the One I call my King.

The book of Deuteronomy was called "the little law," because it summarized so well all the laws of Israel. It is some or all of Moses' final speech to the nation of Israel, reminding them of all God had done for them and exhorting them to follow the LORD faithfully in the future. So there is no better place to look to understand the heart of the covenant relationship God wanted with His people (and still wants today).

**Read It!** Deuteronomy 4:32-40

### **Study It!**

- **What is the point God is making here, through Moses?** [There is no other god like the LORD – His work and His word are totally unique. No other god had or has ever done or said anything remotely comparable to what God did for Israel.]
- **What had God done for the people of Israel to this point?** [Starting with Abraham, built them into a great nation, rescued them from slavery in Egypt, revealed himself to them in power and glory, and brought them through 40 years in the wilderness...]
- **Which of the things that God did, listed in this passage, is most impressive to you? Why?**

### **Apply It!**

- **What are the application points in verses 39-40?** [Take this to heart: the LORD is supreme; so obey His law and it'll go well.]
- **Since the time of Moses, what else has God done to show how totally unique He is compared to all other "gods"?** [Sent His only Son to die for the sins of the world; poured out His Spirit on believers...]
- **Write out three things that amaze you about God:**
  
- **How will you magnify the supremacy of Christ today?**

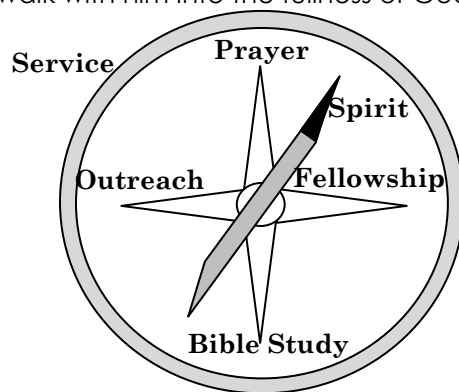
## Personal Study 2 – It's All About Jesus

The first step in the discipleship journey is to yield to Jesus as Lord – to recognize Him as your Supreme Ruler. This single decision carries lifelong implications, for my life is no longer my own. Think about Peter and Andrew when Jesus called them to become “fishers of men.” Leaving their boats and nets was their first step of submitting to Jesus as their Rabbi, but for the next couple of years they did not go back to that old way of life because their new job was to follow Jesus!

Let's be clear about something right up front: salvation is a free gift from God that we receive by faith (Eph. 2:8-9). We cannot possibly earn this gift of grace. But trusting in Christ as Savior also means committing to Him as Lord – the two cannot be separated. Jesus is like a lifeboat, and you can only be saved by “getting on board,” and acknowledging Him as the new captain of your life. True saving faith will result in a changed life. Jesus said we would be able to know his disciples by the fruit of their lives (Matt. 7:20). The 5 habits that we will develop through this course are like the habits of a farmer in his fields. He cannot make the crops grow any more than we can save ourselves. But the wise farmer still plows the field, plants the seed, waters the crops and harvests in season. In the same way, these habits cultivate a growing relationship with Christ and help us produce the fruit He desires in our lives.

### The 5 Habits

After settling in your heart and life that Jesus has first place, there are five habits every follower of Christ should develop: prayer, Bible Study, fellowship, outreach and service. Think of the first four as the points on a compass: (N) Prayer, how we talk to God; (S) Bible Study, how God talks to us; (E) Fellowship, caring for one another and; (W) Outreach, sharing the love of Christ with the lost. The fifth habit, service, is like the casing of the compass – it should become the defining characteristic of our lives, even as Paul called himself a “servant of Christ Jesus.” The needle of the compass, then, is the Spirit of Christ within us, guiding us as we walk with him into the fullness of God's will for our lives.



### **Read It!** Deuteronomy 5:1-11 **Study It!**

- **What are the first three commandments about?** How would you sum each of them up? [God being first, no idols, God's name.]
  - **What reason does God give for the second command about making idols?** [He is jealous and punishes sin.]
  - **What does it mean that God is jealous?** What kinds of things make God jealous? Why?
- 
- **What was God's desire for the hearts of his people (see v. 29)?** [That they would fear or respect Him – keeping Him in his proper, supreme, place in their lives!]
  - **Why did God want the peoples' devotion and obedience (see v. 9 and 29)? For His benefit or their benefit?** [So that it would go well with *them*. God does not need our devotion or duty – He wants our hearts! He wants a close relationship, like a Father with a son!]

### **Apply It!**

- **What in your life might God be jealous of in terms of the time and attention you give to it?**
- **Pray and ask God to incline your heart to fear Him and keep His commands.**
- **Review Psalm 63 and keep working to memorize it!**

## **Personal Study 3 – It’s All About Jesus!**

Fear and jealousy may seem to be negative things to us. No one likes to be scared, and jealousy is usually the mark of an insecure teenager in “love.” Why does the Bible so often associate these emotions with our relationship to God? Fear is a very broad concept that could mean the humble respect you would feel before the school principal or a local politician (assuming you supported him). It can also mean the sheer terror, the adrenaline-surgingly, blood-pumping rush when you nearly have a car accident or think a baby is going to fall from a height. The whole range of attitudes, from simple respect to outright terror are appropriate when we consider who God is.

The Bible teaches that no one can see God and live – the experience would overwhelm us and literally kill us (Ex. 33:20). Even the symbolic presence of God in thunderclouds and lightning was too much for the Israelites to handle (Deut. 5:25). A healthy fear of the Almighty Creator of the universe is a very healthy thing.

Jealousy in a human is not usually an acceptable emotion, because it demands what is not deserved: total devotion. Only God deserves total devotion, and so only God is just in feeling jealous when our hearts are divided. We can understand this in a marriage relationship – giving attention to one other than my spouse should certainly raise jealous feelings in my spouse who deserves, by covenant, to be my all satisfying love. How much more does God long to be the all satisfying treasure of my soul?

**Read It!** Deuteronomy 6:1-9

### **Study It!**

- **What is the central command of this passage?** [v. 5 – Love the LORD...]
- **What does God promise His people if they obey His commands (vv. 2-3)?** [long life, blessing, prosperity, security...]
- **Are the people to merely obey God’s Laws externally?** How much of me does God want (v. 5)? What kind of heart-attitude does God desire (v. 6)?

### **Apply It!**

- **How much should my love for God affect my life (vv. 7-9)?**
- **When during the day should my thoughts and feelings turn to God?**
- **How much should my love for God get into my conversations?**
- **Review the 5 Habits and the Compass.** Which of the habits is the Holy Spirit directing you to work on this week?
- **Review Psalm 63 and meditate on the supremacy of Christ.**

### **Go Deeper!**

- For further study, read Deuteronomy 4-6 (and beyond if you want). Underline and make notes on this key passage, right at the heart of God’s law. Listen for the passionate heart of God – His longings for the response of His people!



## Lesson 2 – Transformed

**Big Idea:** *by receiving Jesus I have been totally changed!*

**Objectives:** as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – the truth of what happened when they trusted in Jesus
- Feel – the joy and security of their new life in Christ
- Choose – to study Ephesians 2 on their own, discovering and applying the truth to their lives

**Discussion Starter:**

- How did your life change after you trusted Christ for salvation? What was different after Jesus came into your life – or, better yet, after you came into Jesus' life?

**Discussion: What we WERE, before Jesus**

- **How does the Bible describe people who have not trusted in Jesus for salvation?**
  - Ephesians 2:1
  - Ephesians 4:17-18
  - Romans 3:9-18
  - Titus 3:3
- **What does the Bible say people in this condition need?**
  - Ezekiel 11:19-20
  - John 3:3-4

**Bible Study: What happens when you receive Jesus?**

Read Titus 3:3-7

- Make 3 columns on a piece of paper or whiteboard. In the left column, write the descriptions of a person "Before Christ" (v. 3). In the middle, write "What God did." On the right, write "After Christ"

Before Christ (v. 3)	What God did (vv. 4-6)	After Christ (v. 7)

- What are people like before trusting in Jesus? (v. 3)
- Why did God save us and change us completely? Was it because we were so great and wonderful (see v. 5)?
- What is different about someone after they have received Jesus as Savior?

The amazing thing about this passage is that it shows that salvation is completely a gift from God – it is all about what God has done for us! Look at all of the verbs in the “What God did” column! “He saved us,” “washing of rebirth and renewal,” “he poured out [the Holy Spirit],” “justified,” made us “heirs.” Some of the verbs are in the passive voice – “we might become heirs” – which again shows that salvation is not something that we can actively gain for ourselves, it is something that God must give to us. Just like a tadpole and the caterpillar can’t make themselves change, so nobody can make themselves into a good person. That would be like a caterpillar trying to put on makeup and attach fake wings on his back!

Read John 8: 31-32

- What sets people free? [the truth] What results in knowing the truth? [holding to Jesus’ teaching.]

Read John 8:33-38

- What condition are people in, apart from Jesus? [slaves to sin]
- How does someone get free from this slavery? [by trusting in Jesus!]
- What is their new condition after being set free? [son of God]

Read Galatians 3:26-4:7

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**Application: How do you feel Today?**

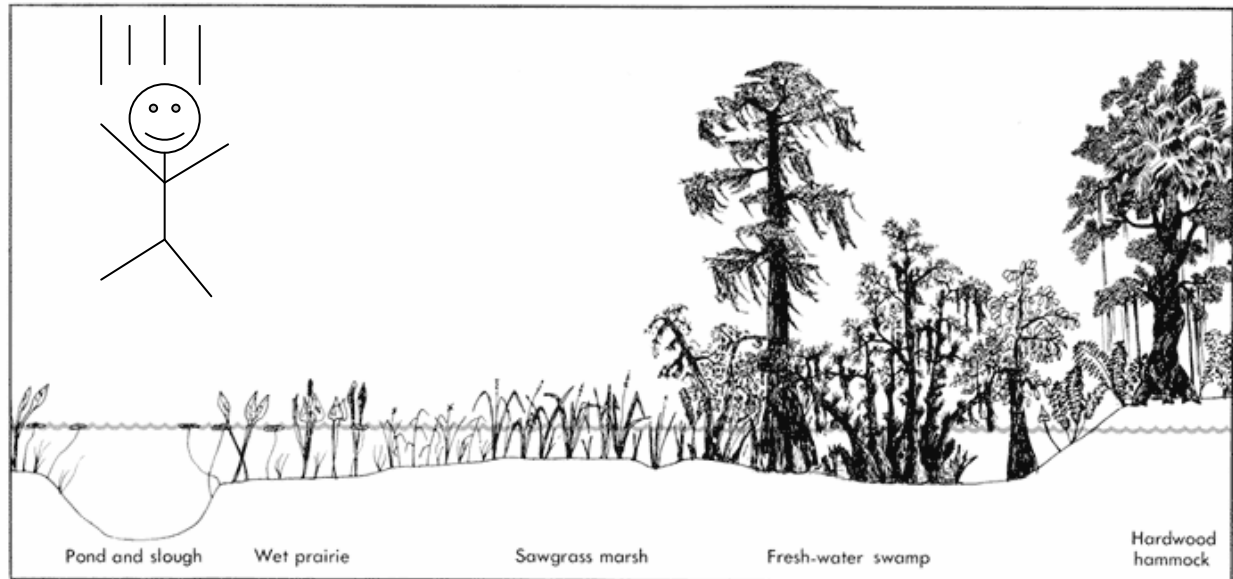
- Have you been totally transformed? How do you know?
- When did you ask Jesus to forgive your sins and be your Savior?
- What happened when you did that – when you trusted in Jesus?
- Do you always feel like you’re forgiven and free, a beloved child of God? What does the Bible say happened to you – whether you feel like it today or not?
- How should this truth affect us each day?

**Pray!**

Spend some time as a group thanking God for what He did for you!

## Personal Study 1 – Dead or Alive

The everglades are a gigantic wetland habitat in Florida that in the rainy season stretches 60 miles wide and 100 miles long! Rich in wildlife, from alligators to snakes and all sorts of fish and birds. Imagine you were suddenly dropped right into the middle of the Florida Everglades, without a boat. How would you feel? What would you do?



In many ways, this is exactly what life is like for people who do not know Jesus personally. They are stuck in a scary, dangerous place from which they cannot escape. Look at what the Bible says about what life was like before you became a believer:

**Read It!** Ephesians 2:1-6

### **Study It!**

- **How does Paul describe people apart from Christ?** "You were \_\_\_\_\_ in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live" (v. 1).
- **Whom or what do non-Christians follow by living in sin?**
  - "the ways of this \_\_\_\_\_" (v. 2)
  - "the ways of... the ruler of the kingdom of the air" Who is that? \_\_\_\_\_
  - "gratifying the cravings of our \_\_\_\_\_" (v. 3)
- **What is the result of following these three things?**
  - "we were by nature \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_." (v. 3)
  - Whose wrath?
  - So what does it mean to be "dead in sin" (v. 1 and also Rom. 6:23)? Does it mean physically dead or spiritually dead because you're under God's wrath?
- **What did God do for us while we were trapped in this deadly swamp?**
  - "God... made us \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ" (v. 5)
  - "God \_\_\_\_\_ us up with Christ" (v. 6)
  - "God... \_\_\_\_\_ us with him in the heavenly realms" (v. 6)
- **Why did God do this for us? (v. 4)**
  - Because we were so great and wonderful OR Because He is rich in \_\_\_\_\_

## **Apply It!**

- **Where are you right now? Are you still stuck in the swamp of your own sin, or has God lifted you out of that and made you alive with Christ? How do you know?**
  
- **Whom or what do you tend to follow? The world, your old sinful nature, the devil OR the Holy Spirit who now lives in your heart? What helps you tune in more to the Holy Spirit and less to the other things?**
  
- **Write out a prayer thanking God for what He did for you:**

*"Dear Lord, thank you for..."*

- **Memorize Ephesians 2:8-10**

## **Personal Study 2 – In Christ or in...**

The bottom line for people is that there are only two places they can be: in Christ or in trouble. Non-Christians don't always feel like they are stuck in the swamp of sin or that they are "dead in their transgressions," but before God that is their reality. The only way to be forgiven and set free from the trap of sin and death is to take hold of the lifeline that Jesus offers you. It's like he has thrown you a rope and receiving him as your Savior is like grabbing onto that rope and saying, "Yes, Lord, rescue me from my sin!"



### **Read It! Ephesians 1:1-7, 11-13**

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup>Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup>For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup>he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace...

<sup>11</sup>In him we were also chosen... <sup>12</sup>in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit...

### **Study It!**

- Circle every place where you see the words, "in Christ," "in him," or "through him."
- Write down everything that is true of you because you are "in Christ" (these are examples of the spiritual blessings we have in him!):

*In Christ, I am... faithful (v. 1), blessed (v. 2)...*

**DEFINITIONS** - check out what some of these words mean:

- Blessing: something good, both spiritually and physically
- Holy: set apart for God's special use
- Predestined: God's kingly decision to choose some people for Himself
- Adopted: legally becoming someone's son or daughter and heir
- Grace: undeserved favor and kindness
- Redemption: being bought out of slavery
- Forgiveness: the removal or release of sin's punishment

- **When did God choose us to be in Christ?**
  - “He chose us in him before the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.” (v. 4)
- **What did God predestine (choose beforehand) us to be?**
  - “In love he predestined us to be \_\_\_\_\_ as his \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 5)
- **How did God choose us?**
  - “He predestined us... in accordance with his \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.” (v. 5)
- **Why did God choose us?**
  - “In him we were also chosen... in order that we... might be for the \_\_\_\_\_ of his \_\_\_\_\_.” (v. 12)
- **How was God able to accept us as his children?**
  - “He predestined us to be adopted as his sons \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ” (v. 5)
  - “In him we have redemption through \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 7)
- **What did you have to do to be saved?**
  - “And you also were included in Christ when you \_\_\_\_\_ the word of truth, the \_\_\_\_\_ of your salvation. Having \_\_\_\_\_ you were marked in him with a seal, the promised \_\_\_\_\_.” (v. 13)
- **Was your salvation the result of any good works you did? (see Eph. 2:8-9)**
  - “For it is by grace you have been saved through \_\_\_\_\_ - and this not from \_\_\_\_\_, it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God – not by \_\_\_\_\_ so that no one can boast.” (Eph 2:8-9)

## Apply It!

- **Write out, in your own words, what is true of you now that you are in Christ:**

*In Christ, I am...*

- **What did you deserve from God?**
- **What did God give you in Jesus?**
- **Write out a short prayer thanking God for these amazing blessings in Christ.**

## **Personal Study 3 – A New Identity**

Super heroes always have a secret identity that lets them blend in with the normal population. After all, “who wants the pressure of being super all the time?” They have a powerful ability that allows them to fight crime and make the world a better place. But much of the time they hide this super power to protect their families from bad guys or just keep the photographers away.

Every believer in Jesus Christ also has a super power – the Holy Spirit Himself lives in each one of us! This is my true identity, as a follower of Jesus, and it is my calling to show people His love and help rescue them from their sin. Sometimes we can hide our true identity in order to blend in with the people around us. We may feel embarrassed if our friends or neighbors don’t believe in Jesus like we do. But God has called us to stand up for the truth of who we are, living out of the power of the Holy Spirit every day, and giving ourselves to the mission of rescuing the lost and hurting people around us!



**Read It!** Ephesians 2:8-10

### **Study It!**

- **How have you been saved?**
  - “For it is by \_\_\_\_\_ you have been saved, through \_\_\_\_\_.” (v. 8)
- **Whose grace is it?** (Remember, grace is undeserved, unearned favor and kindness.)
- **What is faith?** (see Hebrews 11:1; John 20:29)
  - “Now faith is being \_\_\_\_\_ of what we hope for and \_\_\_\_\_ of what we do not see.” (Heb. 11:1)
  - After Jesus rose from the dead, Thomas touched his scars and only then did he finally see Jesus as “My Lord and my God!” “Then Jesus told him, ‘Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not \_\_\_\_\_ and yet have \_\_\_\_\_.’” (John 20:29).
- **What do you need to believe?** (Romans 10:9-10)
  - “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_,’ and believe in your heart that God \_\_\_\_\_ him from the \_\_\_\_\_ you will be saved. For it is with your \_\_\_\_\_ that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” (Rom. 10:9-10).
- **Where does salvation come from?** (Eph. 2:8-9)
  - “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is \_\_\_\_\_ from yourselves, it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God – not by \_\_\_\_\_, so that no one can boast.”
- **Why did God make us and save us?**
  - “For we are God’s \_\_\_\_\_, created in Christ Jesus to do \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Eph. 2:10)

### **Apply It!**

- **What does the Bible say is your true identity?**
  
  
- **Do you sometimes try to hide that true identity? Why?**

- How does Eph. 2:8-10 encourage you? (Have you memorized it yet?)
- What are some good works you could do today to live out your true “super” identity?

**Go Further!**

Check out these other passages and write down what they teach about your identity in Christ:

*In Christ, I am...*

- Romans 5:1 \_\_\_\_\_
- Romans 6:3-6 \_\_\_\_\_
- Romans 8:1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 \_\_\_\_\_
- Galatians 2:20 \_\_\_\_\_
- Colossians 1:14 \_\_\_\_\_
- Colossians 3:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Titus 3:5 \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW: The 5 Habits**



How are you doing at developing the 5 habits of prayer (talking to God) Bible study (listening to God), outreach, fellowship and service? Are you tuning in more and more to the voice of the Holy Spirit as you practice these habits every day? Are you noticing that your heart is becoming more sensitive to other people and you are more naturally serving and loving them? Keep on practicing the habits every day, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you and help you!



## Lesson 3 - Spiritual Life Cycles

**Big Idea:** a follower of Jesus grows best by pursuing the three purposes of knowing Jesus, growing in Jesus and going with Jesus

Objectives: learners will...

- Know – the cyclical nature of the spiral of life and the whirlpool of death
- Feel – motivated to grow closer to Jesus through faithful obedience
- Do – choose one area to focus on this week

**Discussion Starter:** improving in a skill: learn, practice, compete – an upward moving cycle of improvement. What skill have you worked on consistently to improve?

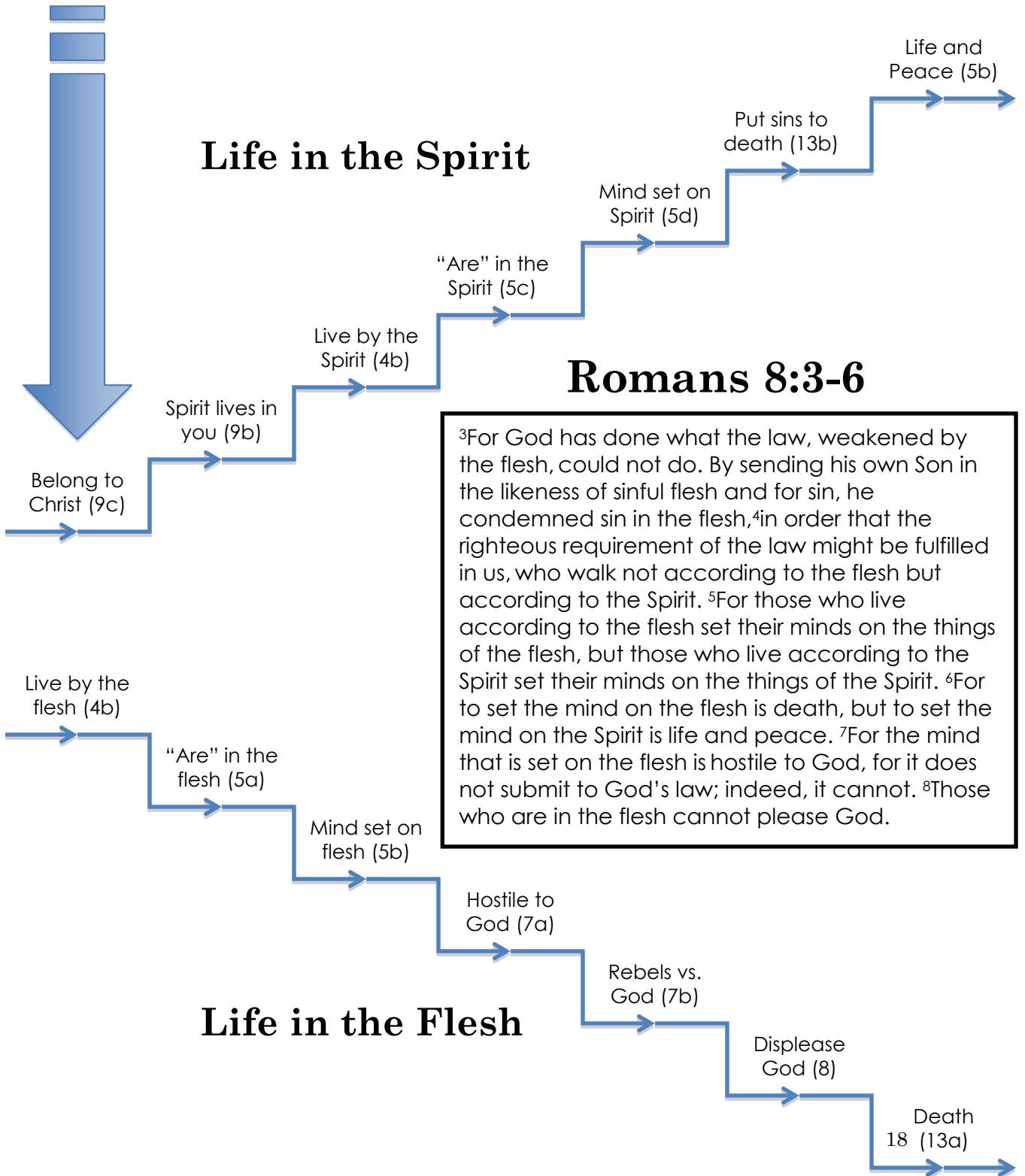
### Proverbs: The 2 Ways

Source	Perspective	Lifestyle	Results
<u>WISDOM</u> (1:7a; 9:10) fear the LORD (1:8) humble teachable (3:5-6) trust, dependence, submission (4:23) heart-set on God	<u>UNDERSTANDING</u> (1:23) respond to teaching and discipline (2:5-6) knowledge (4:1) understanding (4:25) focus (6:22-23) guidance, light (7:25) resistant to temptation (8:5) prudence (8:9) discernment	<u>RIGHTEOUSNESS</u> (2:7-8) blameless, upright, just (2:16) purity (2:20-21) good ways (3:3) love, faithfulness (3:9, 27) generosity (6:6-8) discipline, diligence (8:20) righteous way	<u>BLESSINGS</u> (1:33) safety, ease (2:7) success (2:8) protection (2:21) life (3:2) prosperity (3:4) reputation (3:8) health (3:16) wealth, honor (3:17) peace
<u>FOOLISHNESS</u> (1:7b) proud (1:22) self-reliant (1:24-25) hard-hearted (9:13) folly	<u>CONFUSION</u> (2:13) wayward (4:16) restless (4:19) darkness, confusion (5:12-13) reject counsel and discipline (7:7) no sense, open to influence	<u>WICKEDNESS</u> (1:16) violence, cruelty (1:32) wayward, complacent (2:12-15) evil ways, perverse words, delight in wrong (5:22) slavery to sin (5:23) no discipline (6:9) sloth (6:17, 19) deceit (9:7-8) mockery, abuse, hatred	<u>CURSES</u> (1:19; 9:18) death (1:26-27) disaster (1:28) separation from God (2:18-19) spiritual death (3:33) cursed (3:35) shame (6:11) poverty (9:12) suffering

# Romans 8 – The Spiral of Life, the Whirlpool of Death

## Salvation: Romans 8:1-4

- No condemnation in Christ (1)
- Freedom in the Spirit (from the Law) (2)
- Sin condemned in the flesh of Jesus (3)
- Requirements of the law fully met in us (4)



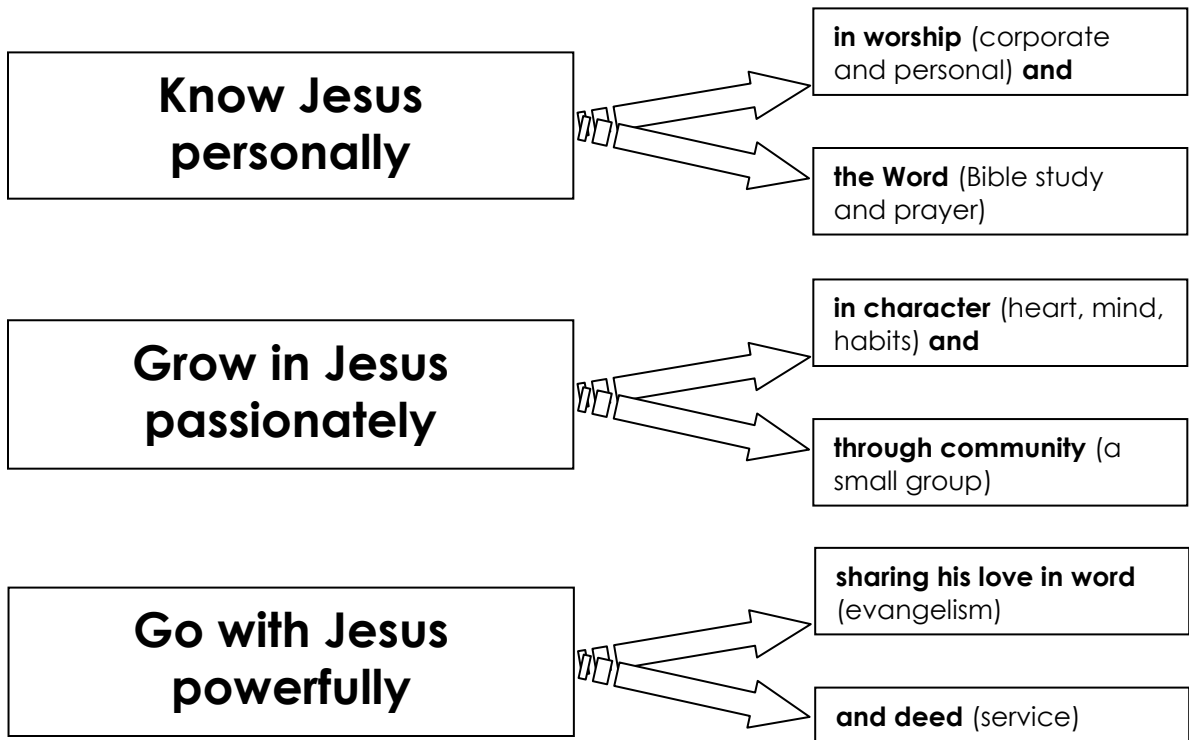
# The Discipleship Cycle

“Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Mark 1:17

- What is the greatest commandment in the Law? (Matt. 22:36-38) [Love the Lord your God...; and love your neighbor as yourself]
- What is the Great Commission? (Matt. 28:18-20) [Make disciples!]



You can sum up the life of a disciple of Jesus in three simple phrases: Love God, love others, make disciples. At Grace, we have defined **our purpose as a church: to make disciples who know Jesus, grow in Jesus and go with Jesus**. Knowing Jesus involves worshiping him and developing a personal relationship with him. Growing in Jesus means thinking like him, valuing the things he values and doing what he wants you to do. And we believe Christian growth is most effective in the context of community. Going with Jesus moves us into redemptive relationships with those around us, seeking to share the love of Jesus with them in both words and actions. Here's a snapshot of the discipleship process at Grace:



- How do these three dynamics of a disciple interact with each other? How does knowing Jesus personally help you grow in him?
- How does growth in your Christian walk affect your desire and ability to share your faith with others? How does faithful ministry and evangelism affect your knowing Jesus?

The spiritual life is naturally cyclical. Positive movement results in more positive movement. Growth leads to health and health leads to growth. The opposite is also true: sinful choices and behaviors lead to more sinful thinking and deeper immorality. I think this is why Jesus kept his message very simple: "Come, follow me." He didn't get into deep theological discussions, but preferred to keep the matter of discipleship very personal: will you, or will you not, follow me? If you do, it will change the whole direction of your life! You'll have to stop whatever you have been doing and recognize that you have a new master. If you refuse to follow me and insist on doing your own thing, you can't hide behind theological platitudes or pious excuses.

Jesus' calling was simple and direct: "Come, follow me." This was a life-changing invitation to come into a personal relationship with Him – the creator and sustainer of the universe! It was an invitation to know him and be known by him – to belong to him! And the relationship was immediately defined as that between a rabbi and his student – a master and his pupil. There could be no illusion that one was coming to Jesus on equal footing with him, to hang out as peers. This was precisely why the Jewish leaders resented and resisted Jesus – they were threatened by his authority! To come to Jesus is to come as a learner who wants to grow and change. After all, it is not the healthy who need a doctor. Knowing Jesus naturally results in growing to be more and more like him. Coming along with Jesus meant watching him, listening to him and increasingly doing what he did. This was the essence of discipleship, or followership.

The third component of Jesus' invitation was, "and I will make you fishers of men." Jesus does not bring us to himself and help us grow so we can sit around, stewing in our own juices. He sends his disciples out to continue the work he started – of seeking and saving the lost.

#### **Application:**

- **Evaluate yourself as a disciple of Jesus:** what grade would you get for the three dynamics of a disciple – knowing Jesus, growing in Jesus and going with Jesus? Consider the 6 elements: worship, the word, character, community, evangelism and service...
- **What is one area you want to work on this week?** Simply ask your rabbi and Lord to help you grow in that area – like the disciples did when they said, "Lord, teach us to pray..."
- **Spend some time reflecting on the 2 ways of Proverbs and the 2 cycles in Romans 8.** What pitfalls do you find yourself straying into sometimes? What protections can you put in place to build up and keep some positive momentum in your spiritual life cycle?

## **Personal Study 1 – “Come and see!”**

My family was invited recently to the premier for Narnia's *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. On the way there, we learned that Georgie Henley (Queen Lucy) and Skandar Keynes (King Edmund) would be available for pictures and autographs. Naturally, we were all excited to see them – not really expecting to get close at all. But when we arrived, we were able to get to both of them – to our astonishment and delight.

If we get excited about meeting a 15 and 19 year old movie star, how much more amazed and honored should we be to have an open invitation to spend time with our Lord and Savior, our King and Creator?



**Read It!** John 1:35-51.

### **Study It!**

- Who initiated Andrew's contact with Jesus? (vv. 35-36)
  - What did Andrew know about Jesus when they first met? (v. 36)
  - What do you think Andrew learned and experienced when he spent the day with Jesus (v. 39)?
  - What did Andrew do right after his encounter with Jesus? (v. 41)
  - Who initiated Philip's contact with Jesus? (v. 43)
  - What did Philip do after Jesus called him? (v. 45)
  - What did Andrew, Philip and Nathanael conclude about Jesus? (vv. 41, 45, 49)
- 
- How did they come to know these things about Jesus?
  - How were their lives different after knowing Jesus personally?

### **Apply It!**

- When Jesus invites you to “Come and see where he is staying” what do you usually say?
- When you do agree to spend some time (maybe even a whole day sometimes!) with Jesus, how does it help you to know him better?
- How does knowing the truth about who Jesus is encourage you in your daily life?
- Spend some time right now quietly resting in the presence of your Lord and rabbi.

## **Personal Study 2 – “Follow me...”**

Who has most influenced you in life? More than likely it's a parent or very close friend you have known for years. Their example has helped you to not only understand what is most important in life, but has shown you how to live out the values you now hold dear. All human beings are followers. Our problem is that we follow the wrong people. We want to be thin movie stars or wealthy CEOs; we want to be published and praised; we want the trappings of happiness... The question we must honestly ask ourselves is: am I really, truly, following **Jesus**?

**Read It!** Mark 1:14-20

### **Study It!**

- Based on your previous study in John 1, what did Peter and Andrew already know about Jesus? To what extent did they already know him? How does this help you understand their response in Mark 1?
- What was Jesus' message when he started his public ministry? (v. 15) What do you think this meant to his first disciples? What did they expect of him when he mentioned “the kingdom”? (see, for example, Isaiah 9:6-7.)
- Over the next three years, how did the disciples grow in their understanding of Jesus' mission and their role in “his kingdom”? (see, for example Mk. 8:31-38.)
- How did Peter and Andrew's lives change when they chose to follow Jesus? (v. 18)
- How do you think they felt that Jesus included both of them, as brothers, and their fishing partners? How did that relational community become a place of growth for all of the disciples?

### **Apply It!**

- What is an area of your life that Jesus is calling you to follow his example in today?
- How might someone in your small group or another Christian friend encourage and support you as you strive to grow in this area?
- Write out your commitment to the Lord:

## **Personal Study 3 – “I will make you fishers of men.”**

I am a lousy fisherman. In my life I have caught a small handful of fish – most of them very small. Recently I have tried to teach my boys how to fish, only to fail miserably. From what I understand, much of a fisherman's success depends on the time and place he fishes and the bait and tackle he uses. Once, when I was in high school, a couple of friends took me to a pond right at dusk. A cold stream was pouring into the pond, and they had caught many fish here a week before. Four of us put worms on our hooks and tossed them in. And every other cast we reeled in a fish. It was the most fun I've ever had fishing! (And it has never happened again.)



I think many of us get discouraged when our first few attempts at evangelism don't bring anyone into the kingdom. And we can be very tempted to hang up our pocket NTs and gospel tracts. But I believe Jesus calls us to look closely at *how* we are fishing for people, to see if there might be an ideal time and place – and particular resources to get the attention of certain people he has placed in our lives.

**Read It!** Luke 10:1-12

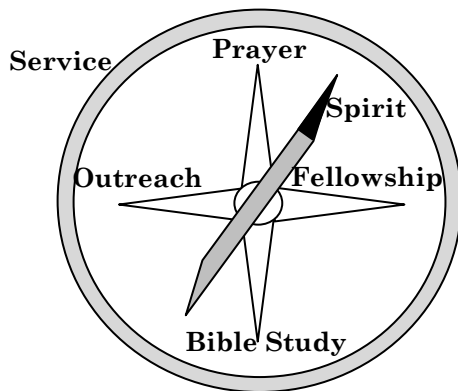
**Study It!**

- On whose authority were the 72 sent out? (v. 1, 3)
- According to Jesus, what was needed for the harvest? (v. 2) And what was the way to get those needed workers?
- What reasons can you think of for the instructions in v. 4?
- Where did the resources for the mission come from? (vv. 4, 7)
- What was the process the missionaries were to follow? (vv. 5-9)
- What kind of reception did the evangelists expect? (vv. 3, 10)
- How do evangelistic missions impact God's judgment on people and places? (v. 12)

**Apply It!**

- On whose authority are we sent out to “fish” for lost people? (Matt. 28:18)
- How should the search for a “person of peace” influence our evangelism and church planting efforts? (vv. 5-7)
- Who is God calling you to pray for? How can you cultivate a relationship with these people, being sensitive to opportunities to plant seeds of the gospel...?

**REVIEW: The 5 Habits**



How are you doing at developing the 5 habits of prayer (talking to God) Bible study (listening to God), outreach, fellowship and service? Are you tuning in more and more to the voice of the Holy Spirit as you practice these habits every day? Are you noticing that your heart is becoming more sensitive to other people and you are more naturally serving and loving them? Keep on practicing the habits every day, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you and help you!

## Lesson 4 – Bible Study

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**Big Idea: God's complete revelation of Himself and His will is available to us in His Word – but we must train ourselves to accurately study it!**

Objectives: learners will...

- Know – how to study a passage inductively in its historical, grammatical context
- Feel – motivated to let God speak to them personally through His Word
- Do – practice outlining a passage to discover its central message

**Discussion Starter: What's wrong with this picture?**

- I am leading a conference on missions and really want to share a verse that's all about courage in the face of danger. Daniel was in danger – I'm going to study **Daniel 6** and look for how Daniel was a great example of courage in the lion's den!
- I am really bummed out today, so as I come to the passage in my Bible reading plan, I am going to look for a word of encouragement. My passage is **Hebrews 6**. I am going to just meditate on v. 7 and let the "rain of God's grace" bless my heart.
- I am curious about what is going to happen next in the end times sequence of events. So I am going to study **Math. 24, 1 Thes. 4, 2 Thes. 2 and Rev. 19-20** and make up a chart that shows the order of when the antichrist will come and what will happen before, during and after the tribulation.
- I remember **Isaiah 40** is a really inspiring passage – I am going to read the last few verses, because they talk about eagles, and email them to my non-Christian friend about how God wants to lift her up today.

### WARNING!

All of these are examples of Eisogesis – reading something INTO a passage of Scripture. Whenever we come to the text with an agenda or a pre-set idea, warning bells should go off and caution flags should start waving in our heads. It is very easy to let our theological system, our current feelings, our pressing questions, our ministry agendas, or any number of other things to influence how we understand a passage of Scripture. Now, don't get me wrong: God wants to answer our questions, he wants to address our feelings and help us be effective in ministry. And often it is our questions, feelings and needs that drive us into His word to look for answers and guidance. But **we must discipline ourselves to let God's Word speak, so that we are hearing from GOD** and not twisting his word to say what we want it to say!

So I want to practice a Bible Study method you are probably familiar with called Inductive Bible Study. The goal of inductive study is to draw out the meaning of the passage before us through rigorous interrogation – coming at the text with question after question to discern **what was said, when it was said, to whom it was said**. Only AFTER we have listened carefully to God's Word in its original context should we move to apply it to our lives and ministries. This is also called hermeneutics – the discipline of interpreting Scripture according to its historical and grammatical context.

Let's take Daniel 6 as an example. And we'll see, in the end, if it's really a lesson about courage, or if God really has something much more personal and profound to say.

### **DANIEL 6 – Inductive Bible Study**

Bible study should always move through three stages: Observation, Interpretation and Application. Long before we make application to our lives (what does this mean to ME) we must discover, through diligent observation, what it MEANT when God original spoke and acted. After we have made careful study of what it meant, we can then interpret the overall purpose and



message of the passage, drawing out timeless principles. Then, and only then, we are ready to explore the personal application of the passage to our own lives.

1. Observation → **What** does it say?
2. Interpretation → **So What** does it mean?
3. Application → **Now What** do I do?

## **1. OBSERVATION: WHAT does it say?**

The Observation stage has two components: exploring the historical context and analyzing the grammatical presentation of the text.



### **A. The Historical Context – What is going on?**

Let's start with the basic journalistic questions: who, what, when, where, why, how? This will help us discover **the Historical context**, or setting of the book.

- Who? Who wrote the book? Who is it about?
- What is going on in the book? What is it about?
- What is going on in this passage?
- When did this take place? What is the historical context, or setting of the book?
- Where is this happening?
- Why is this passage included in this book? What is the purpose of this chapter?
- How does the text convey its message? What kind of literature is this (history, law, prophecy, epistle, etc.)?

All of these questions (and any others that occur to you) are helping us to LISTEN effectively to the passage, without letting our own thoughts, feelings and questions influence what we hear. The more we understand WHEN it was said, TO WHOM it was said (the historical context) the more we will understand WHAT was said (the grammatical content) and why (the purpose). As we discover these critical elements, God's Word will take on the full depth of meaning and power God Himself intended it to have – and we will hear His clear, resounding voice speaking to us across the ages!

- How would you describe the Historical Context of the book of Daniel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Within the story of the whole book of Daniel, how does chapter 6 fit in? (i.e. what is happening in chapter 5? What is happening in chapter 7?)

### **B. The Grammatical Content – What does it say?**

Now we are ready to study the actual words of our passage – understanding that it is an integral part of the whole book of Daniel, set during the Jewish exile into Babylon. This approach to Bible study – analyzing the way the author actually put the words together – is a key step in faithfully interpreting God's Word.

- Read all of chapter 6.
  - **Sum it up! What is this passage about?** How would you sketch out the story? What kind of literature is this? [It's a narrative: a story with a beginning, middle and end.]

- **Document the details!** Go through each verse and make a list of the details supplied by the text, making special note of the ones that appear very significant. (But include every detail! The Bible is sparing in the details it supplies, so each one is in there for a reason.)
- **Break it down.** Identify the different sections of the narrative – where are the breaks or progressions in the story?

Verses	Section Heading	Principles	Application Points
1-5	The Background – Daniel excels toward promotion through godliness, provoking the jealousy of the other 120 rulers		
6-9	The Decree – The rulers (deceptively) convince the King to make a law that people can worship only him for 30 days		
10-13	The Verdict – Daniel defies the law by praying to the LORD, as usual, and gets caught		
14-18	The Punishment - The King tries to rescue Daniel, but must enforce his own law; but in his distress he offers a “prayer” to Daniel's God		
19-23	The Deliverance – the King finds Daniel unharmed, having been saved by His God due to his innocence and faith		
24	The Vindication – the King threw the conniving rulers into the lion's den, where they (and their families) were instantly devoured		
25-28	The Message – the King wrote to the nations, exalting Daniel's God who rules in power over the whole world		

- **Draft headings.** Write a summary statement over each section you have defined. Feel free to adjust the way you have broken up the verses as you gather more information and gain a better feel for the text.
- **What's the Big Idea?** Take a shot at articulating what you think the central message of this passage is. [Since the LORD is the one true God, we can trust Him to save us no matter what dangers or persecutions we face.]
- **Analyze and Evaluate.** Go back through the details you noted, the sections you defined along with their headings, and see if it all fits together. Maybe you missed something, or one verse doesn't quite fit. Let any questions you have drive you deeper into the text, to discover what the central message really is.



**An exegetical note:** Bible Study is exegesis – drawing truth and meaning OUT FROM a passage of God's Word. Always keep in mind that what you are studying is a **translation** from the original language. So if you run into a question or confusing elements in the words of your translation, compare it to another version (or several others) to enhance your understanding of what was actually said in the original. Translations like the NASB and the ESV can be very helpful in this process, since their approach is to follow more closely (than, say, the NIV) the grammatical construction of the original languages.

**If you have questions...** it is perfectly normal! Studying the Bible is challenging and time consuming work, and sometimes leaves us wondering if we have come to an accurate understanding of the passage. Always feel free to contact your class teacher, small group leader or your pastor – any of them would be delighted to discuss what you are learning in this study.

**Is there one right answer?** You may be wondering, as you study different passages of God's Word, if there is just one correct interpretation. History has shown that, when it comes to a specific section of Scripture, godly, wise Bible scholars have frequently disagreed about what it means and how to apply it. So the way you break a passage into pieces or sum up a section may sound somewhat different from how your teacher or a classmate does. But you are likely to find common themes and ideas, since you are studying the very same words and are trying to understand the passage in its original context.

## **2. INTERPRETATION: SO WHAT does it mean?**

After you have broken down a passage into its various parts, and have started putting it back together, you are ready to really grapple with its essential meaning. At this stage of study, you are trying to uncover the timeless, universal principles that the passage conveys. Again, be very careful that you do not make any assumptions or read back into the text what you have always expected to find in this story. Let the words of the text continue to speak for themselves.

**Go back through each section you have defined and draw out the principles that section presents.** For example, what principle emerges from the first few verses about why Daniel was being promoted ahead of the other rulers? As you do this reflective work, you may need to adjust how you have defined the sections and the headings and summaries you have sketched out. This is part of the process! Don't let anything – including your own study – gain control over the meaning of the text. The passage itself must be in charge. LISTEN! Let God speak to you through His Word!

## **3. APPLICATION: NOW WHAT do I do?**

Based on the work you have done of listening to the text, drawing out its meaning – now you can consider how this applies to your life. The study of God's Word must never become an exercise in simply gaining knowledge. The goal should always be to know God better in order to love and obey Him more fully. **Start with the Big Idea you have defined, and be sure it includes a point of application.** It is often effective to phrase your big idea with a theological truth that leads to a practical application: "Since God is... we should..."



**Each principle you have discovered should have an application to life.** It is at this point that you may strongly sense the Holy Spirit identifying one issue in particular. But again, be careful! Don't let anything gain influence over the text itself! You may have guilt (whether true or false) leading you to focus on one thing over another. You may be tempted to quickly gloss over one area because you simply prefer not to deal with a certain struggle or sin. So first define all of the possible applications. And then consider the ones most relevant to you.

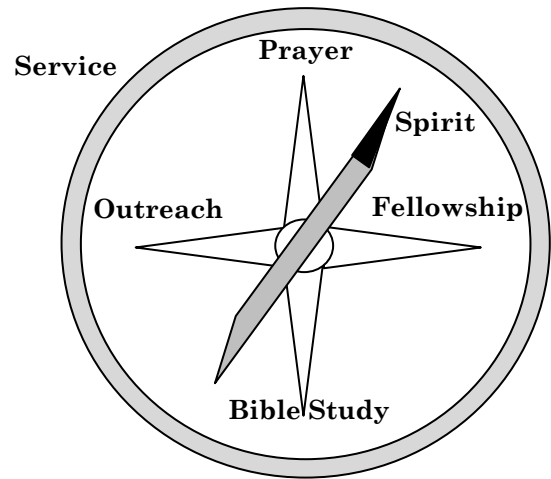
A word of caution to teachers: those of us in teaching roles can often fall into **the trap of defining all of the applications a passage has for OTHER PEOPLE.** When we do this, we lose out on the

privilege and joy of God speaking directly to US! In our desire to see God speak to others, we can actually close our own ears to His voice. May this never be!

## **BRING IT ALL TOGETHER!**

The goal of Bible Study is to grow in your relationship with God. We want to know Him more personally – and active, attentive listening is at the heart of any relationship. God has made Himself fully known through His Word – and He is always available if we will simply make the time to come to Him!

Take a look again at the 5 Habits on the compass: Prayer, Bible Study, Outreach, Fellowship and Service. As we seek to Know Jesus, Grow in Jesus and Go with Jesus, these habits will help keep us on track. As we listen to God through His Word, seek Him in prayer, love one another in the church, reach out to the lost and live a life of service, the Holy Spirit will guide our every step. There is never really any question about what God wants us, as His people, to do. We know from His Word that these are habits He has called us to develop, in the context of a loving relationship with Him. But as we grow in these disciplines, he will direct us into new adventures and opportunities every day!



In the personal studies that follow, you are invited to do your own inductive Bible studies in four other genres of the Bible – other types of literature we find in Scripture. Learning to identify and accurately interpret God's Word as it was written requires an understanding of the different genres the Bible includes. Since this passage in Daniel, like many in the Bible, is a narrative (story), we will first look at a section of the Law in Leviticus. Then we will consider passages in the prophets and the poets of the Old Testament. Finally we will study a New Testament letter. Each genre is unique and requires a somewhat different approach for interpretation. But if you come with an open heart and a desire to let the Holy Spirit speak to you through His Word, He will make the meaning plain as you faithfully study each text.

## **Personal Study 1 – Law**

When you first crack open the Bible, there are many stories to read and digest – including the very creation of the universe. But even Genesis, with all of its fascinating narratives, is part of the Jewish Torah – the Law of God. The first five books of the Bible make up the Law and defined the heart of the nation of Israel, its purpose and the details for how it should operate as the holy people of God. When reading and studying a passage in the Torah, it is essential to remember the context of the giving of the Law through Moses on Mount Sinai. As an additional study project, read Exodus 19 and reflect on the instructions God gives to Moses, the significance and foreshadowing of Moses as the intermediary between God and his people (then see. Deut. 18:15), and the powerful manifestations of God's presence – plus the commands that immediately follow in chapter 20.

## **Read It!** Leviticus 19

### **Study It!**

- **OBSERVATION – What does it say?**
  - a. What is the historical context? What is going on? Who is writing this? What kind of literature is this?
  
  - b. What is the grammatical context? What is the message of this text? How does the passage make its point? Note the details. Analyze the structure. Break the passage into logical sections and summarize the message of each one.
  
- **INTERPRETATION – So what does it mean?** What are the universal principles that emerge from this passage? What lessons can we learn from this text?
  
- Summarize the central message of Leviticus 19:

### **Apply It!**

- **APPLICATION – Now what do I do?** Which principles seem especially relevant to my life right now? What do I sense God calling me to do as a result of this study?

## Personal Study 2 – Poetry

After the Law and the historical section, we come upon the “the writings,”: the inspirational poetry the Hebrews used for worship and corporate edification. Most of our Bible reading is personal and individual, but the Jewish culture was predominantly communal and relational. So the reading of the Law, the history and the poetry God inspired David and others to write most often happened in the context of the community gathered for worship and prayer – whether centrally in the temple area, or in countless synagogues scattered around the Mediterranean and Middle east.

**Read It!** Psalm 31

### **Study It!**

- **OBSERVATION – What does it say?**

- a. What is the historical context? What is going on? Who is writing this? What kind of literature is this?
  
- b. What is the grammatical context? What is the message of this text? How does the passage make its point? Note the details. Analyze the structure. Break the passage into logical sections and summarize the message of each one. (Note in particular the turning point verse of the psalm...)

- **INTERPRETATION – So what does it mean?** What are the universal principles that emerge from this passage? What lessons can we learn from this text?

- Summarize the central message of Psalm 31:

### **Apply It!**

- **APPLICATION – Now what do I do?** Which principles seem especially relevant to my life right now? What do I sense God calling me to do as a result of this study?

## Personal Study 3 – Prophets

The prophets of Israel were God's spokesmen, declaring the Word of the Lord to His people. They confronted sin, instructed in obedience to God's Law, and exhorted to faith and faithfulness even in the face of peril and persecution. Before God's people had a complete record of His written word, they had access to His voice and His will through these dedicated and sacrificial servants. Isaiah, preaching around 700 years before Jesus was born, is perhaps the quintessential prophet. His book is often referred to as the fifth gospel because of the clarity of vision God gave him regarding the Messiah, the Servant who would give himself up to save not only Israel, but all of the nations (49:6). If you can, read Isaiah 40-66 all in one sitting, taking in the entirety of this second part of Isaiah's sweeping and majestic word from the Lord. (If not, cut to the chase and read chapter 40, the section below and then 65.)

**Read It!** Isaiah 52:13-53:12

### **Study It!**

- **OBSERVATION – What does it say?**
  - a. What is the historical context? What is going on? Who is writing this? What kind of literature is this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. What is the grammatical context? What is the message of this text? How does the passage make its point? Note the details. Analyze the structure. Break the passage into logical sections and summarize the message of each one.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **INTERPRETATION – So what does it mean?** What are the universal principles that emerge from this passage? What lessons can we learn from this text?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Summarize the central message of Isaiah 53:

### **Apply It!**

- **APPLICATION – Now what do I do?** Which principles seem especially relevant to my life right now? What do I sense God calling me to do as a result of this study?

## **Personal Study 4 – New Testament Epistle**

Turning now to the New Testament, we first encounter the four gospels – written between AD 50 (Mark) and 90 (John) by four different authors, some focusing on a Jewish audience (Matthew) and others on a Gentile audience (Luke – who added a sequel for his patron, called the Acts of the Apostles). Beyond these foundational records of the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus, plus the testimony and ministry of the apostles and the early church – we find a collection of letters, called epistles. The first set were written by Paul – the famous persecutor of the church turned preacher of the gospel. The canon of God's word is rounded out by Hebrews (from an anonymous author), letters from Peter, John and Jude and the stirring conclusion in John's Revelation (greek: apocalypsis).

**Read It!** Ephesians 4-6

### **Study It!**

- **OBSERVATION – What does it say?**

- a. What is the historical context? What is going on? Who is writing this? What kind of literature is this?
  
- b. What is the grammatical context? What is the message of this text? How does the passage make its point? Note the details. Analyze the structure. Break the passage into logical sections and summarize the message of each one. (Note the symmetry of this book: 3 chapters lay the foundation of what is true of believers as loved, alive and united in Christ; the next 3 chapters apply these truths in practical exhortations. 5 times Paul writes, "therefore/then... live/walk..." arguing that based on what is true of us in Christ, we should live in certain ways.)

- **INTERPRETATION – So what does it mean?** What are the universal principles that emerge from this passage? What lessons can we learn from this text?

- Summarize the central message of Ephesians 4-6:

### **Apply It!**

- **APPLICATION – Now what do I do?** Which principles seem especially relevant to my life right now? What do I sense God calling me to do as a result of this study?



## Lesson 5 - Prayer

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**Big Idea: Listening to God and talking with Him is the heart of your relationship!**

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know - a simple pattern for prayer, based on Jesus' model
- Feel - motivated to make God their top priority relationship
- Choose - to set time aside this week to hang out with God

### Discussion Starter:

- **Describe a good friend of yours. What makes him or her a good friend?**  
How did you become friends? What kinds of things have grown your relationship?
- **How is your relationship with God like that friendship you just described?**  
How is it different? What can make it hard to feel close to God sometimes?
- **What is the main thing that God wants from us?** (See Matt. 22:36-40 – the Great Commandment) [Love. He wants our hearts, devoted to him in a loving relationship!]

**Prayer is all about RELATIONSHIP!**

### **Focus: The Lord's Prayer**

Read Matthew 6:5-15

- **What principles for prayer does Jesus provide before he gets to the prayer itself?** (see. vv. 5-8)
- When Jesus taught this prayer, do you think he intended his disciples to only use these words, every time they prayed?

“When I give thanks, my thoughts still circle about myself to some extent. But in praise my soul ascends to self-forgetting adoration, seeing and praising only the majesty and power of God, His grace and redemption.”

Ole Hallesby  
in Foster's *Prayer*, p. 84

It's obviously good to use these exact words sometimes, but Jesus gave this prayer as a **MODEL** for how we should approach God (notice he says this is “how” you should pray not “what” you should pray).

**How would you categorize the different parts of the prayer? In other words, what is the progression Jesus teaches when we come to God in prayer?** [Go to the Father directly; start with worship – “hallowed be your name” means may your name be honored as holy; followed by submission to His reign (kingdom) and will; then asking (for needs, not wants!), especially forgiveness (our primary need) but also for help in temptation and protection from the enemy.]

- **Be creative and try to come up with a fun way to remember the structure of the Lord's Prayer** – sort of like the ACTS acronym (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) but based on this prayer. It could be an acrostic like ACTS, or a rhyme or a visual, whatever expresses the stages of the prayer and helps you remember it.

## The Lord's Prayer – Matthew 6:9-13

Scripture Phrase	Caption Heading	Notes
Our Father in heaven		
Hallowed be your name		
Your kingdom come		
Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven		
Gives us today our daily bread		
Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors		
And lead us not into temptation		
But deliver us from the evil one.*		

\* A note on textual criticism: the epilogue to the Lord's Prayer – "for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" – was clearly added to certain manuscripts long after the original writing. The oldest and best manuscripts do not contain this phrase, so the printing as recorded in the NIV has an "A" rating for certainty (on a scale from A to D) in the UBS Greek NT (Aland, Metzger, et al). So this phrase should carry the same weight and value we assign to any ancient hymn or writing from a church father such as Clement of Rome or Augustine – but it should not be viewed as inspired Scripture.

## PRACTICE TIME!

One tool I have found helpful came from Richard Foster and *The Celebration of Discipline*. He describes a discipline called **centering down** where you hold out the palms of your hands facing down in an attitude of release. First close your fists really tightly and imagine that all of your worries, concerns, and even your sins and temptations are enclosed in your hands – you are clinging to all of them. Then open your hands and see what it feels like to release all of that junk to the Lord. **RELEASE.** As the writer to the Hebrews said, “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles us... fixing our eyes on Jesus” (Heb. 12:1-2). This is a great way to connect your body and mind in prayer – by physically releasing your worries and sins to the Lord.

“Our Adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry and crowds. If he can keep us engaged in ‘muchness’ and ‘manyness’ he will rest satisfied... ‘Hurry is not of the Devil; it is the Devil.’” Richard Foster – *A Celebration of Discipline*, p. 15

Then turn your hands over, with your palms open and now facing up, resting on your legs in an attitude of receiving. Pause and quietly **RECEIVE** from the Lord. “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble... Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:1,10). In your quiet prayer time you might rest in God’s presence this way for one minute or for 20 minutes. The time doesn’t matter, it’s the attitude of your heart that matters. But sometimes a small adjustment to our posture, a little movement of our hands can help focus our hearts and minds on the God who loves us.

- **Why do you think Jesus includes the teaching on forgiving others (vv. 14-15) right after this teaching on prayer?** What does forgiving someone else reveal about the forgiver? What does it show if someone is NOT willing to forgive? (See Matt. 18:21-35, the parable of the unmerciful servant.)

## Practicing Prayer

The only way to become skillful in prayer is to pray. The only way for the conscious movement into God’s presence to become natural for you is to practice it intentionally, over and over again. We can fool ourselves into thinking, “I’m praying all the time,” when in reality we have never really learned to quiet our own thoughts long enough to tune into the holy, loving, almighty God of the universe.

“The disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us... to pray is to change... to think God’s thoughts after him: to desire the things he desires, to love the things he loves, to will the things he wills.” Richard Foster – *A Celebration of Discipline*, p. 7, 33

**Take 3 minutes right now to just quietly pray.** If you want to move off to a corner of the room, or even into another room, go ahead. We’ll set a timer and call you back after five minutes. Practice the progression we talked about and just spend 5 minutes alone with God.

- **How did it go? Was it easy or hard?** Did it feel like a long time or a short time? Was it helpful to follow a model prayer, like the Lord’s prayer? How so?
- I’ll challenge you to set aside a little longer amount of time later today or tomorrow. Try spending 10 whole minutes in quiet prayer. Then 11 or 15. It’s like doing push-ups – you can’t just drop and do 100. You have to gradually train your body; and as with push-ups it is often your mind that makes you stop before your body does.

**Let's take another 5 minutes and pray together.** There is no difference between praying by yourself and praying with one or twenty other people. It's just including God in a conversation. Let's follow the same progression – starting with worship, approaching God directly, moving through submission into our requests for what we need, especially forgiveness and protection from temptation and the devil. Pray short prayers – just one or two sentences. Feel free to build on what someone else has prayed, just like in a normal conversation. And by all means pray again – don't feel like you can only pray one time and you have to get it all in at once. Again, we'll set a timer. And don't worry if it's quiet for a few seconds – just use that time to focus on the Lord and center your heart on him.

- **How did you feel praying with the group?** What makes it intimidating sometimes to pray out loud? Isn't it encouraging and uplifting when others agree with and affirm your prayers and desires?

## Make a Plan!

Our best intentions have no value if they don't change our habits. We all have the general sense that "I should pray more."

"The call asks, do you really accept the message that God is head over heels in love with you? I believe that this question is at the core of our ability to mature and grow spiritually. If in our hearts we really don't believe that God loves us as we are, if we are still tainted by the lie that we can do something to make God love us more, we are rejecting the message of the cross"

Brennan Manning – *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, p.165

How many times have you heard an old person say, "I need to eat less and exercise more?" **What difference do those intentions make in that person's life?** Four frogs were sitting on a log and one decided to jump off. How many frogs are on the log? [4. He didn't jump, he just decided to.]

- **What time and place works best for you to have a quiet time with God?**
- Have you found any devotional books or a Bible reading plan that has helped you be consistent in your time with God?

Basically, prayer is the life-blood of a relationship with God – just as communication is the life-blood of any relationship. What happens to a friendship when you don't spend time together and you don't ever talk? Eventually you grow apart and you're not really good friends any more. Friendship needs communication, interaction, TIME.

"If we truly love people, we will desire for them far more than it is within our power to give them, and this will lead us to pray."

Richard Foster – *Prayer*, p. 191

- Fill out a 3x5 card, or slip of paper and **write down your plan for hanging out with God this week.** When, where, what you'll read, how you'll pray.

## **Personal Study 1 - Listening Prayer**

“When I started praying I thought prayer was talking. But the more I prayed the more I realized that true prayer is listening” (Soren Kierkegaard, quoted in *A Celebration of Discipline*). In order to pray effectively for ourselves and others, we must first tune our hearts to God's heart – we must learn to quiet the noise in our minds in order to hear the still, small voice of the Spirit within us. I will readily admit that this is very difficult for me, and I am sure it does not come naturally for most modern Americans. But two things help me quiet my own thoughts and fears: meditating on Scripture and “centering down,” using the palms down, palms up method described above. Practice this approach now, in a quiet place where you won't be interrupted for at least 15-20 minutes. As the prayer and worship book for God's people, the Psalms are a great place to go for this kind of exercise. The one I selected is a personal favorite – and it's relatively short and always inspiring.

**Read It!** Psalm 103

### **Reflect on It!**

- The goal for today is not to analytically study the passage, but to simply quiet your own thoughts in order to hear God's voice clearly in your heart. As you slowly and carefully read the passage, over and over, what do you hear God saying to you? What verse or verses is God using to speak to you?
  
- Now that you have some of God's thoughts percolating in your mind, open your hands – palms down – in your lap, in an attitude of surrender. Consider any worries, concerns or issues that are weighing on your mind – and one by one, **RELEASE** them to your loving Father. Ask God to search your heart and reveal any sins you have been holding on to. Renounce them, repent and turn from them, releasing your sins as well to your forgiving Savior. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us,” (Ps. 103:12) “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1:9).
- Then turn your hands over, and **RECEIVE** from God. Let Him speak to your heart, and simply let His loving presence wash over you.

### **Journal It!**

- Another exercise that helps me in my prayer life is a dedicated prayer journal. After spending some time quietly before God, take a few more minutes to write down how God spoke to you – what you heard, what you felt, how you were moved. In future months and years you will find great encouragement from going back over your prayer journals to see how God blessed you, prepared you, comforted you and challenged you at different stages in your journey.

## **Personal Study 2 – Intercessory Prayer**

Once we hear from God, the natural response is a greater concern for those around us, especially those that belong to Him. And what more significant way have we been given to bless others than to pray for them? This is Jesus' primary role right now, and has been for nearly 2,000 years (Heb. 7:25) – has he been wasting his time? One of the last things Jesus did on this earth was to pray for his disciples, including us!

**Read It!** John 17

### **Reflect on It!**

- Identify just two or three parts of this profoundly significant prayer that you feel God would have you focus on in your time of intercession today. As you think about and pray for the people God has placed in your life, what do you feel God desires for them? What grieves God's heart? What does our Lord want to see happen?

### **Pray It!**

- Sketch out a prayer list of people close to you that you feel God is calling you to pray regularly for. Probably family members, friends in your small group, others in your church, church leaders and pastors, friends, neighbors, co-workers...
- Spend some time praying for these people. If your list is long, break it up so you can cover the people in a week or a month, with a few to focus on each day.

### **Journal It!**

- Maybe during your prayer time God brought your attention to someone in particular. Spend a few extra minutes praying for that person – it may be the most important thing you do all day! Write down how God directed your prayer time today, including any impressions you had of people and needs He may have made you aware of.
- Be sure to contact the people God led you to pray for – He may be leading you into an opportunity to serve them!

## Personal Study 3 - Evangelistic Prayer

Often our prayers focus on physical matters – like the health and safety of people we care about. There is nothing wrong with this, but God has made it clear that we are not to worry about this life (Matt. 6:25) but to focus instead on His kingdom (Matt. 6:33). After all, we can't know (for sure) if it is God's will to heal someone physically, or change their material circumstances. But we can always pray for the salvation and spiritual growth of others and know, without a doubt, that we are praying according to God's will. A very helpful book called, *Pray & Watch*, came out recently that teaches a short prayer to use all the time: "Father, send your Holy Spirit to work in the heart of \_\_\_\_\_, draw him to yourself and turn him into a kingdom laborer."

**Read It!** Psalm 103

### **Reflect on It!**

- The goal for today is not to analytically study the passage, but to simply quiet your own thoughts in order to hear God's voice clearly in your heart. As you slowly and carefully read the passage, over and over, what do you hear God saying to you? What verse or verses is God using to speak to you?
  
- Now that you have some of God's thoughts percolating in your mind, open your hands – palms down – in your lap, in an attitude of surrender. Consider any worries, concerns or issues that are weighing on your mind – and one by one, **RELEASE** them to your loving Father. Ask God to search your heart and reveal any sins you have been holding on to. Renounce them, repent and turn from them, releasing your sins as well to your forgiving Savior. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us," (Ps. 103:12) "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:9).
- Then turn your hands over, and **RECEIVE** from God. Let Him speak to your heart, and simply let His loving presence wash over you.

### **Journal It!**

- Another exercise that helps me in my prayer life is a dedicated prayer journal. After spending some time quietly before God, take a few more minutes to write down how God spoke to you – what you heard, what you felt, how you were moved. In future months and years you will find great encouragement from going back over your prayer journals to see how God blessed you, prepared you, comforted you and challenged you at different stages in your journey.

## Lesson 6 - Holiness

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### Big Idea: God calls us to live out each day the reality of our righteousness in Christ

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – the truth that in Christ, they are holy, forgiven and free
- Feel – inspired to live a life of constant worship and devotion to God
- Choose – to take specific steps to grow in an area of weakness

### Discussion Starter:

- **When you hear the word, “holy” or “holiness,” what comes to mind?** [Priests, holy men, God, the temple...]
- **Do you typically think of other believers as holy?** Why or why not?
- **Do you naturally apply the word holy to yourself?** Why or why not? [Whether from humility or from an honest understanding of ourselves, we tend to be reluctant to think of ourselves as holy, sacred and pure...]

**The truth, according to God’s word, is that every believer IS holy – a “saint.”**

More than 50 times in the New Testament the word, “saint” or “holy one” is used to describe believers. We know from the letters that contain these designations that the people in these churches were not “saintly” in a practical, lived-out sense – but that they were being described based on the theological truth of who they were in Christ. Check out Rom. 1:7; 8:27; 15:25; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Php. 1:1; Col. 1:2...

### Focus: Truth and Action

Read Romans 12:1-2

“No person can consistently behave in a way that is inconsistent with the way he perceives himself.”

Neil Anderson,  
*Victory over the Darkness*, p. 43

- **What is the “therefore” there for?** [It refers back to the first 11 chapters, summed up by the phrase, “in view of God’s mercy.” Based on God’s gracious bestowal of the righteousness of Christ on those who receive him by faith, Paul now describes our response.]
- **What is the central exhortation of v. 1?** [to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.] How do you react to this word picture? Why?
- **Paul says this surrender of ourselves is our “spiritual act of worship” – how does this command fulfill God’s desire for worship in the OT (with animal sacrifices, etc.)?** [God always wanted the heart – for people to ‘love him’ with all they were – but worship tended to devolve into empty rituals. Now, by providing righteousness in Christ to those who believe, true worship is possible for those who will offer themselves completely to God. OT sacrifices always had to be perfect, unblemished, HOLY – then they were fully set apart for God by being sacrificed: burned up or eaten. The OT often mentions things that were “devoted” to the LORD, reserved fully and only for him!]



- **According to v. 2, how are we to continually be transformed?** [by the 'renewing of our minds,'] See also Col. 3:1-2 – 'set your minds on things above...' What contributes to having a consistently renewed mind?

One thing to set our minds on is the truth of what God has done for us in Christ – as in the first 11 chapters of Romans! Let's take a quick spin through Romans to see this truth:

- 1:16-17 – “The gospel... is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God for the salvation of everyone who believes... For in the gospel a \_\_\_\_\_ from God is revealed... that is by faith from first to last.”
- 1:18 – “The \_\_\_\_\_ of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men...”
- 2:1 – “\_\_\_\_\_, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else...”
- 3:9 – “Jews and Gentiles alike are all under \_\_\_\_\_.”
- 3:23-24 – “For \_\_\_\_\_ have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are \_\_\_\_\_ freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”
- 5:1 – “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith we have \_\_\_\_\_ with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- 5:9 – “Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be \_\_\_\_\_ from God's wrath through him!”
- 5:19 – “Just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made \_\_\_\_\_.”
- 6:2 – “We \_\_\_\_\_ to sin; how can we live in it any longer?”
- 6:6 – “For we know that our \_\_\_\_\_ was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”
- 6:18 – “You have been set free from sin and have become \_\_\_\_\_ to righteousness.”
- 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- 7:25 – “I myself in my mind am a slave to God's \_\_\_\_\_, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.”
- 8:1 – “Therefore there is now no \_\_\_\_\_ for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
- 8:3-4 – “For what the law was powerless to do... God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be \_\_\_\_\_ met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the \_\_\_\_\_.”
- 8:9 – “You, however, are \_\_\_\_\_ not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit if the Spirit of God lives in you.”
- 8:11 – “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give \_\_\_\_\_ to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”
- 8:14 – “Those who are led by the Spirit are \_\_\_\_\_ of God.”

“Satan will try to convince you that you are an unworthy, unacceptable, sin-sick person who will never amount to anything in God's eyes... Believing Satan's lie will lock you into a defeated, fruitless life. But believing God's truth about your identity will set you free.”

Neil Anderson,  
*Victory over the Darkness*, p. 57

- 8:17 – “And if we are children, then we are \_\_\_\_\_ - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”
- 8:30 – “And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also \_\_\_\_\_.”
- 8:37 – “No, in all these things we are more than \_\_\_\_\_ through him who loved us.”
- 10:9-10 – “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your \_\_\_\_\_ that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

Think about this: what the good news about Jesus reveals is that **“a righteousness from God,”** is now available to all who would believe! The righteousness, or justice, or holiness, of God Himself has been offered to you, if you would receive Jesus by faith! The law (i.e. the 10 commandments, etc.) could only set an external standard, presenting a picture of the righteousness of God. It could not grant people that righteousness, but could only show them how far they fell short of God’s standard of perfection. But now, through the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, the law-fulfilling righteousness of Christ Himself can be credited to those who trust in him – confessing him as Lord and believing in him in their hearts.

So if you have trusted in Jesus for salvation, then God has declared you righteous – not because of anything you have done, but entirely because of what Jesus did through his death and resurrection! This is the fundamental difference between the evangelical gospel and every other religion – the gospel calls people to trust in what Christ has **DONE**, while religion relies on what people can **DO** to find God or peace or whatever. Our growth in the faith is no different – we do not get saved by faith and then become holy by works. This was the great error of the Galatian church. No, having begun by faith – full reliance on the finished work of Christ – we must continue on, trusting in him to finish the work he started! To do otherwise, would be like trying to carry a sailboat!



This does not, however, mean that we have no part to play. Far from it! God Himself will provide the wind to guide and empower us, but we are responsible to set the sails of our heart, mind and body – keeping them in line with Him. This is where the spiritual habits we have been working on – of prayer, Bible study, fellowship, evangelism and service – when combined with the power of the Holy Spirit, produce real, ongoing change in our lives!

We have also seen, in looking at the spiritual cycles the Bible describes, that it is possible for believers to live after the flesh (their pre-Christian ways of thinking and acting) instead of

following the promptings of the Spirit (Romans 8:1-15).

So, Paul writes, we have an obligation to:

- “Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body... do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness” (Rom. 6:11-13);
- “Put to death the misdeeds of the body” (Rom. 8:13);

- “Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Gal. 5:16);
- “Put off your old self, which is being corrupt3ed by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:22-24)
- “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature... Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” Col. 3:5,9-10

In a theological sense, the believer has ALREADY been covered with the righteousness of Christ – “All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Gal. 3:27).

- Your **POSITION** = **declared righteous** in Christ, holy

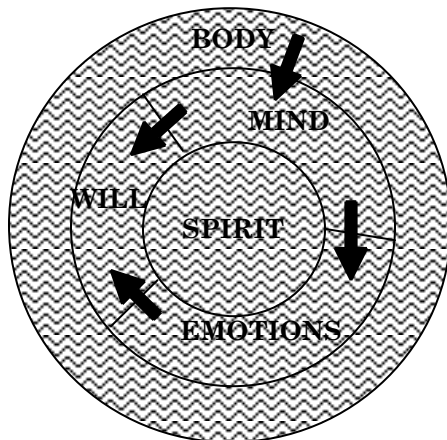
But in a practical sense, the believer must CONSTANTLY choose to live out this truth, rather than going back to his old, sinful ways. (The diagram below is adapted from *Victory Over the Darkness*)

“Sanctification... is the process of becoming in your behavior what you already are in your identity.”  
Neil Anderson,  
*Victory over the Darkness*, p. 85

- Your **PRACTICE** = **becoming righteous** by the Spirit; putting off old, sinful ways of thinking and acting and putting on new, Christ-like ways of thinking and acting

## Non-Christian

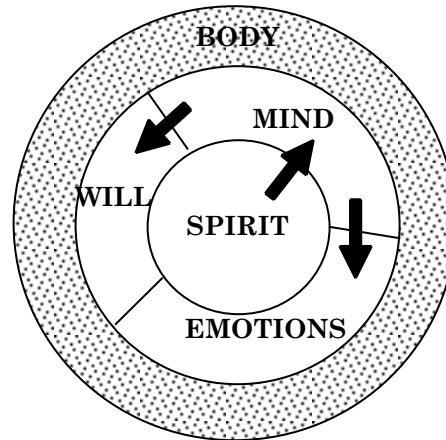
Life “in the flesh”



Apart from Christ, all people are “dead in their sins” (Eph. 2:1) – their spirit’s under God’s wrath, their minds driven by the sinful inclinations of their sensual nature, which results in emotional distress, a confused will and many physical problems as well.

## Christian

Life “in the Spirit”



At conversion, a believer’s inner spirit is transformed and immersed with the Holy Spirit. By walking in the Spirit, tuning one’s mind to His leadings through prayer and Bible study, the emotions and will can be brought in line with the truth, and the habits of the body will follow.

## Personal Study 1 – Righteous Saints

Paul wrote to the church in Colosse – a gathering of believers he had never met, but rather heard about through one of his colleagues in ministry, Epaphras (Col. 1:7-8). Paul's letter to this congregation, like its sister letter he likely wrote around the same time (Ephesians), is rich in both theological truth and practical application. He first addresses the believers as “the holy and faithful brothers in Christ,” (1:2) – establishing right away the basis for his exhortation later to holy living (3:12). Essentially his message is that **Christ has made you holy already, now live that way!** Chapter one contains what many believe is an early Christian creed – establishing the truth of Jesus' person and work. Study this passage today and reflect on the powerful implications of its truth.

**Read It!** Colossians 1:15-23

### Study It!

This is a structural outline for this passage – a grammatical breakdown of the verses, highlighting primary clauses and subordinate phrases (that modify or depend on the primary clauses). The purpose of such an outline is to break a passage down into its smallest parts and then put them back together with a greater awareness of what the central message is. As you read through the passage, make notes and observations about what you find. After this study, you'll have a chance to draw some conclusions and applications below.

	<b>NOTES:</b>
<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.	Jesus is God in the flesh, God made visible Jesus is the “first” or highest in creation
<sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.	Jesus is the creator of everything Jesus is the purpose of creation
<sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.	Jesus is eternal Jesus is the sustainer of everything
<sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.	Jesus is the head, the Lord of the church He is the first to rise from the dead (permanently) Jesus is supreme
<sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,	The reason Jesus is supreme is that he houses divinity in a human body!
<sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.	It is only because of the incarnation that reconciliation was possible – making peace between God and man through his sacrificial death.

<sup>21</sup> Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.	This reconciliation was necessary for you – who were enemies of God because of our sin
<sup>22</sup> But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—	But God has reconciled YOU by Jesus’ work on the cross (a physical work, not just spiritual Gnosticism) The purpose of your salvation was to present you holy, perfect and pure
<sup>23</sup> if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.	The condition of holiness is perseverance in the faith, committed, strong, fully reliant on the GOSPEL (not your own resolve) – the good news of Jesus I just spelled out.

- In vv. 15-19, what truths about Jesus does Paul establish? These describe the PERSON of Jesus – he is:
- After establishing the person of Jesus, Paul goes on to the WORK of Jesus in v. 20. What is the work Jesus accomplished?
- How did this work of Jesus apply to the believers in Collose (vv. 21-22)?
- The purpose or goal of Jesus’ reconciling work was “to present you \_\_\_\_\_ in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation” (v. 22)
- What was the condition for appearing before Christ in this unstained condition (v. 23)?

**Apply It!**

- How did this study of Jesus person and work encourage you and speak to your heart?
- Why is it essential to have a clear understanding of the gospel before you “just try to be good”?
- Based on this passage, what is true of YOU right now?

## Personal Study 2 – Rooted and Raised Up

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Paul conveyed the clarity and beauty of the gospel – the good news of Jesus' person (God in a body) and work (reconciling sinful people to a holy God through his sacrificial death) – admitting that it is a mind-blowing mystery: “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). The heart of Paul's ministry was the proclamation of Christ – “admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ” (Col. 1:28). This shows again the two sided nature of our holiness, or sanctification: God has done the work of cleansing us from sin and making us holy (1:22), but we must continue to labor with wisdom and diligence, “struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me” (1:29). Today study and reflect on the truth of Colossians 2 to gain a deeper understanding of what is already yours in Christ!

**Read It!** Colossians 2:6-15

**Study It!**

- Make up your own structural outline of this passage so you can better see the primary and secondary clauses – analyze the way Paul builds his argument and makes his point.
- What is the primary command of this passage? (Hint: it's the main verb in v. 6 and it rhymes with “give bin shim.”)
- How many times does Paul use the phrase “in Christ,” “in him” or “with him”? What is the significance of this repetition?
- What is Paul's concern for the Colossians? (v. 8, see vv. 16-23)
- What is Paul's answer to the false teachings that were out there? (vv. 9-12) What makes this message about Christ so much better news than what some there were teaching?
- What truths about believers does Paul establish in this passage (vv. 9-15)?
- What significance do you see in “circumcision” (remember, this was the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham – so that all the males of God's people

would be physically marked as His own, a process that involved some blood...)?  
(vv. 11-12)

- What victories did Christ accomplish for us through his death and resurrection?  
(vv. 13-15)

### Apply It!

- Based on the truth of Jesus' person Paul described (ch. 1), and how he applied that to believers who are "in Christ" (ch. 2), what is true of you as one who is "in Christ"?
  - V. 6 – "Just as I received him as Lord, I need to continue to \_\_\_\_\_ in him."
  - V. 7 – "I need to be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in him, strengthened in the faith."
  - v. 10 "I have been given \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ."
  - V. 11 "In him I was also \_\_\_\_\_, in the putting off of the sinful nature."
  - V. 12 "having been \_\_\_\_\_ with him in baptism and \_\_\_\_\_ with him through my faith in the power of God."
  - V. 13 "When I was dead in my sins... God made me \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ."
  - V. 13 "God forgave me \_\_\_\_\_ my sins."
- Which of these truths is hardest for you to believe or accept? Why?
- In your struggle with sin, how does it make you feel to know that you have already been given "fullness in Christ," and that he has taken away from you the sinful nature, marking you as his own through spiritual "circumcision"?
- Write out a prayer of praise, celebrating what God has done for you in Christ:

## Personal Study 3 – Put off, Put on!

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Building on the truth of who Christ is and who we are in him, Paul now exhorts believers to live out the truth of our identity. He reviews the facts (“you have been raised... for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God... you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self...”) then moves seamlessly into a call to holy living: “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion...” Paul apparently has no problem with saying, almost in the same breath, “You are holy! Now, be holy!” This is the message of the gospel – you have been forgiven, set free, made righteous, sanctified, so live as God’s chosen, precious, holy ones!

**Read It!** Colossians 3:1-17

**Study It!**

- Make another structural outline of this passage; make sure to highlight the key assertions (you are...) and imperatives or commands (you must...).
- According to vv. 1-2, what should be focused, or set on things above?
  
- What are the reasons for this focused pursuit (v. 1, 3-4)?
  
- What must be put off - put to death and gotten rid of (vv. 5-9)? Why (vv. 6-7,9)?
  
- Paul says “you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self” (vv. 9-10) – what is the significance of the tense of these verbs (i.e. are they past, present or future)?
  
- How is the new self “being renewed”? (v. 10)
  
- What are believers to put on, or clothe themselves with (vv. 12-14)?
  
- How can believers put on all of these virtues? (vv. 15-16)



- What is the role of the church, the Christian community, in helping one another grow in these virtues? (v. 16)
- What is the purpose or goal of all of this? (v. 17)

### Apply It!

- Do a little self-evaluation: on a scale from 1-10, how would you say you are doing at putting off the sinful nature? At putting on the love and righteousness of Christ?
- What are your primary means of setting your heart and mind on things above? (Review the 5 habits on the Compass, and ask for the Spirit's guidance!)



- What is an area you could use some help in "putting off" an ongoing sin or temptation? What steps will you take today to surrender that area to the Lordship of Christ?

## Lesson 7 - Fellowship

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### Big Idea: believers grow best in authentic Christian community

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that fellowship is sharing life – the joys and struggles – with other believers
- Feel – motivated to bless others in the body of Christ
- Choose – to share a current struggle with a trusted Christian friend

### Discussion Starter:

- **What are the top one or two things that have helped you grow as a follower of Jesus?**
- **What role did other believers play in your early growth as a disciple?** How important was Christian community in your pursuit of Jesus?
- **What is one of your most lasting memories from a small group or discipling relationship?**

Every believer is a follower of Christ – a disciple being trained by the Master. So by definition we are all learners who should be growing in our understanding of our Master's teachings and our obedience to them. Several things contribute to growth: solid Biblical teaching, spiritual disciplines, life-changing circumstances (often of the painful variety), service in ministry (our topic for next week) and Christian community. Andy Stanley calls these the 5 Faith Catalysts: Practical Teaching, Private Disciplines, Pivotal Circumstances, Personal Ministry and Providential Relationships (*Ignite*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2005).

Jesus made it clear by his example and by his direct instruction that his followers would grow best in community with one another. In fact, he made love for one another the defining mark of his true followers (John 13:35). So claiming to be a disciple of Christ apart from the church is Biblically impossible. Love for God naturally and necessarily results in love for His people (1 John 4:7-11).

**Fellowship** (Greek = koinonia) builds on the root noun for "common" (koinos) and so expresses a sharing or participation together with someone in a two sided relationship of giving and receiving. For the ancient Greeks, koinonia went beyond the mere sharing of material goods or even of mutual commitment to a city-state but pictured the total harmony of the universe, including the relationship between God and people. The Greeks passionately pursued fellowship with the gods through sacred meals. This is in marked, and somewhat surprising, contrast with the Old Testament practices of the Jews. The OT seems to deliberately avoid the use of fellowship terms to describe the God-human relationship, not referring to people as "sharers with God" but rather as "servants of God."

But in the New Testament, fellowship with God in Christ is a prominent theme, especially for Paul.

"A vision we give to others of who and what they could *become* has power when it echoes what the Spirit has already spoken into their souls."

Larry Crabb  
*Connecting* p. 165

- 1 Cor. 1:9 – “God is faithful, by whom you were called into **fellowship** with his son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- 1 Cor. 10:16 – “Is not the cup of thanksgiving... a **participation** in the blood of Christ?”
- Rom. 6:4,6,8 – “Buried... Die... live **with Christ**... crucified with Christ.”
- Rom. 8:17 – “Suffer **with Christ**.”
- Col. 2:12 – “buried... raised **with Christ**.”
- Eph. 2:6 – “raised up and seated **with Christ**.”
- Php. 3:10 – “**Fellowship of sharing** in his sufferings.”
- 1 Pet. 4:13; 5:1 – “**Share** in Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.”

Fellowship with Christ (or with the Spirit – Php. 2:1) naturally and necessarily leads to fellowship with other believers. After all, we are united together in the BODY of Christ – all of us together! As one body, we have an organic and unavoidable interdependence!

**Bible Focus:** 2 Cor. 8-9

- Read 2 Cor. 8:1-5,9
  - For whom is Paul raising money in this whole section? Why? (see Rom. 15:25-28)
  - In what circumstances did the Macedonian churches give? To what degree of sacrifice did they give? How did they view their gift?
  - What enabled them to be so generous in such difficult times? (v. 5,9)
- Read 2 Cor. 8:13-15
  - What kind of equality is Paul describing here? Is this communism or something else? What return will the Corinthians receive by sharing now?
- Read 2 Cor. 9:6-14
  - What principles for giving does Paul outline here? What kind of harvest does God promise the generous giver (v. 10)?
  - What results come from generous sharing? (vv. 12-14)
  - Why is financial sharing such a powerful illustration of the fellowship of the early church? (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32)
  - What does the failure to share material things reveal? (James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17)

Fellowship is first of all sharing in the very life of Christ – dying with him in order to be raised up with him, sharing in his sufferings in order to also share in his glory one day. Out of the overflow of this intimate connection with Christ comes fellowship with other believers, who are also bound to Jesus – the head of the body of which we are all a part. So all believers in the universal, world-wide church ARE connected to one another in a very real sense – we are one, even though we are separated by many miles and

“We live out the gospel by killing an already defeated enemy and surrendering ourselves to the energy and prompting of the Holy Spirit in our new hearts.”

Larry Crabb  
*Connecting* p. 86

many languages. As one body, we should rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn (Rom 12:15). When one part of the body suffers, we should all suffer (1 Cor. 12:26). Our own physical bodies should remind us – every time we stub a toe or have a headache – of the believers around the world who are suffering right now. And

this concern should move us to both prayer and action!

On a local level, in our little church body, fellowship should be the defining character of our community – a mutual concern for one another, a sharing of one another's joys and burdens, successes and struggles. If this would truly and consistently take place, there would be far fewer instances of deep depression, far less marital strife, less financial struggle and much greater freedom and victory in Christ. Larry Crabb, after 30 years in Christian counseling, argued that most counseling would be unnecessary if the church would provide the deep, intimate connections between people it is designed to facilitate. Here is a sketch of his vision of **Connecting**.

- We need to move beyond “fix-what’s-wrong” treatments and “do-what’s-right” accountability to become a true healing community.
- What we all really need is the life of God Himself, poured out into us so we can resist our bad temptations and release the good he has placed inside of us.
  - This is what God does for every believer: 1) he provides a taste of Christ delighting in us – of total acceptance and a vision of who we will become; 2) he searches for the good he has placed within us, affirming this goodness and value and; 3) he exposes what is bad in us (and often is causing us pain) in order to lead us back to his grace that will change us.
- This is precisely what we need to do for one another: 1) offer total acceptance and share a vision of who the person can become; 2) search for the good God has already placed within them and; 3) help expose the sin that is causing pain in order to lead them to forgiveness and healing at the cross.

“When two people connect... something is poured out of one and into the other that has the power to heal the soul of its deepest wounds and restore it to health.” (xi)

“CONNECTING is a kind of relating that happens when the powerful life of Christ in one person meets the good life of Christ in another.” (66)

“The core battle in everyone’s life is to relate well to God, to worship him, enjoy him, experience his presence, hear his voice, trust him in everything, always call him good, obey every command (even the hard ones), and hope in him when he seems to disappear. That’s the battle the community of God is called to enter in each other’s lives.” (150-1).

“It is the actual life of God, the energy with which the Father and Son relate to each other, a set of inclinations put in our hearts by the Spirit and kept alive by his presence. It is a power that is most fully released as we develop a compelling and awe-inspiring vision of who another person is and what he or she could become because of the gospel.”

Larry Crabb  
*Connecting* p. 66

“The energy that fills a truly qualified helper includes far more than ‘mere’ compassion, it involves engagement that goes miles beyond listening skills; it offers probing wisdom and life-giving words that provide more than the promise to pray, gestures of support, and bits of advice.” (175).



Connecting is a commitment to see beyond the junk on the outside, the sins that so often surface in our relationships, and to look for the good that we know God has placed within each of His children. By sharing with someone else a vision of who God is

helping them become, we can encourage them to repent of and reject the sin that is hurting them and come back to Christ to be forgiven and set free. As a church, we are developing a ministry of **Biblical counseling** to provide “intense personal discipleship” for those with ongoing struggles – to help them identify the idols of their hearts, the sins they are clinging to, in order to find freedom and victory in Christ.

## **Personal Study 1 – A Picture of Partnership**

Fellowship is often translated in the New Testament as “sharing” or “participation” in the joys and struggles of other believers. But in the book of Philippians the word *koinonia* conveys even more: partnership. Paul first gives thanks to God for the *koinonia* in the gospel the Philippians had shown, “from the first day until now” (Php. 1:5). It becomes plain in chapter four that this partnership included financial support – a “sharing with me in the matter of giving and receiving” (4:15-16). Take some time today to study this powerfully encouraging book!

**Read It!** Philippians

### **Study It!**

Today let’s do a word-study on “*koinonia*” in this short letter from Paul – looking at each use of the word in its specific context. First write down how the word is translated, maybe comparing a few different versions (see [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)). Then, by studying the verse and its context, write out a definition of the word. Finally, write out some principles that emerge about fellowship and how it is applied in each case.

	<b>Translation and meaning of “<i>koinonia</i>”</b>	<b>Principles and application</b>
1:5	“Partnership” – participation, sharing in the work	Fellowship is more than just sharing a meal now and then – it is joining together in the work of the gospel!
2:1	“Fellowship” – communion with, sharing in the Spirit	
3:10	“Fellowship” – sharing in Jesus’ sufferings, experiencing the same	
4:14-15	“Sharing” – participating in struggles with, giving material gifts	

**Apply It!**

- What can you do to increase your “partnership in the gospel” – maybe with a missionary overseas or an organization you support...? Have you recently considered going on a short term missions trip yourself?
- Paul assumes that believers have “fellowship with the Spirit” – what does he expect of us because of that communion we all share (Php. 2:1-4)?
- What does “sharing in the sufferings of Christ” look like in your life right now?

## **Personal Study 2 – One Anothering**

At the heart of Christian community are our relationships with each other. Do we, as members of Christ's body, demonstrate the truth of our unity in Him, and pour out His love to one another? Or do we more often focus on ourselves – our own desires and preferences – causing disunity in the church and harm to one another? Take some time to read the passages below and write out the commands, that all end with “one another.”

### **Read It! Study It!**

- ❖ John 13:14,22,34;
- ❖ John 15:12,17
- ❖ Rom. 12:10,16;
- ❖ Rom. 14:19;
- ❖ Rom. 15:5,7,
- ❖ 1 Cor. 12:25
- ❖ Gal. 5:13,15;
- ❖ Gal. 6:2
- ❖ Eph. 4:2; 25, 32;
- ❖ Eph. 5:19,21
- ❖ Php. 2:3
- ❖ Col. 3:13,16
- ❖ 1 Thes. 4:9,18;
- ❖ 1 Thes. 5:11,13

### **Apply It!**

- Which of these “one anothering” commands are you strongest in?
- Which is an area in which you need to grow?
- Whom do you sense God calling you to love or serve today?
- What can you do to obey Jesus' command today?

- ❖ Heb. 3:13;
- ❖ Heb. 10:24-25
- ❖ James 5:9,16
- ❖ 1 Pet. 1:22;
- ❖ 1 Pet. 4:9-10; 5:5
- ❖ 1 Jn. 1:7; 3:11,23; 4:7,11

### **Personal Study 3 – Overflowing**

We looked earlier at the book of Ephesians and saw the beautiful symmetry of the book – balancing three chapters of inspiring theology with three chapters of challenging exhortation. The first half establishes that in Christ believers are loved, alive, united and victorious. The second half challenges us to “therefore, live” in light of this truth. Five times this command is repeated (4:1; 4:17; 5:1-2; 5:8 and 5:15). The final command to live with wisdom in an evil world is followed by another command that explains how we can carry this out: “Be filled with the Spirit...” Then Paul uses five participles to describe what will result when a community of believers is filled with the Spirit of God.

**Read It!** Ephesians 5:15-21

**Study It!** (English Standard Version)

<sup>15</sup> Look carefully then  
how you walk,  
not as unwise but as wise,  
making the best use of the time,  
because the days are evil.  
<sup>17</sup>Therefore do not be foolish,  
but understand what the will of the Lord  
is.

And do not get drunk with wine,  
for that is debauchery,  
but **be filled with the Spirit.**

- (1) **addressing one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
- (2) **singing** and
- (3) **making melody** to the Lord with your heart,
- (4) **giving thanks** always and for everything  
to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- (5) **submitting to one another** out of reverence for Christ.

- What is significant about the contrast between “getting drunk” and “being filled with the Spirit”?

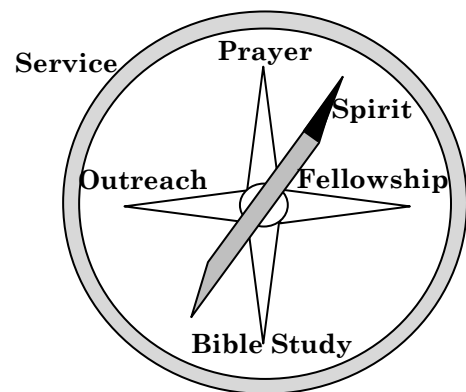


- Of the five participles that flow out of being filled, which ones are mainly internal - for the individual believer, and which are communal - for relationship with other believers?

Notice in Ephesians 3:16-19, as Paul concludes the first half of the book with a prayer, that the key to living in fullness is experientially knowing the love of Christ. If I am not walking in the fullness and power of the Spirit, the answer is to come back to the gospel of Jesus' love and His grace that overflows to me through his sacrifice. The gospel is what transformed us in the first place, bringing us from death to life. And the gospel is what continually fills us, as we continually bring our sins to Jesus and ask Him to cleanse us and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Now look at the result of this deep, ongoing reflection on Jesus' love (Eph. 3:19): being filled up with the fullness of God Himself!

### Apply It!

- How "full" do you feel right now? Why do think that is?
- What are you doing to seek the filling of the Spirit?
- What might be preventing His filling in your life?
- Remember the Compass – let the Spirit guide you through Prayer, Bible study, fellowship, outreach and ministry!
- Spend some time meditating on Paul's prayer in 3:14-21 – Make that your prayer today!





## Lesson 8 - Service

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**Big Idea: all believers are called and gifted to build up the body by serving one another**

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that fruitful ministry must be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led
- Feel – encouraged that they are gifted and called to ministry
- Choose – to use their God-given gifts and abilities to serve others

### Discussion Starter:

- **What is a strange ability that you have – a “stupid human trick” you can do?**
- **When is a time you have felt very fruitful and fulfilled in ministry?**
- **The old adage, “20% of the people do 80% of the work” often rings true... What do you think keeps people from serving in ministry in the church?**

### Our Provision

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Here is a visual progression of how salvation takes place:



*“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup>And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” Romans 8:28-30*

The baptism of the Spirit takes place at the moment of **salvation**. When a person receives Jesus by faith (John 1:12) he becomes the temple or dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). No longer does the holy presence of God remain safely distant from people in the most holy place of a temple building. Believers – individually and corporately – are the temple. We are declared righteous based on the completed work of Christ that is accounted to us by God's grace and through our faith (Eph. 2:8-9) and the Spirit of God comes to dwell in our hearts. So in Christ we **ARE** holy judicially, and through the Holy Spirit we may **BECOME** holy practically.

Our calling as forgiven children of God, then, is to live out in **practice** the truth of our **position** in Christ by means of the **provision** of the Holy Spirit. All who have trusted in Christ have a new identity in Him (2 Cor. 5:17) that will result in the fruit of a changed life as the Holy Spirit instructs, guides and empowers them. Once the heart has been changed (Jer. 31:33), the behavior will naturally change as well (Matt. 7:16). The Christian life is simply walking with the Lord, keeping in step with the Spirit of God who dwells in our hearts.

## Our Practice

**Living out the truth of who we are in Christ** – the message of Ephesians:

Position	Practice
"In Christ... with Christ." (chs. 1-3, see above)	"Therefore live a life worthy of the calling you have received." (4:1)
"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup> to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (4:22-24)	"So you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking." (4:17)
"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children..." (5:12a)	"...and live a life of love." (5:12b)
"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." (5:8a)	"Therefore... live as children of light" (5:8b)
"...not as unwise, but as wise." (5:16b)	"Be very careful, then, how you live..." (5:16a)

This is the **normal** expectation of every believer and is not reserved for leaders or for exceptional moments in life. Another metaphor Paul uses to illustrate the Christian life is being "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). This, too, is given as a command to all believers as an ongoing pattern of their individual and corporate lives.

This passage describes the **results** of being filled with the Spirit:

- **Worshipful Edification:** "addressing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs"
- **Joyful Celebration:** "singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart"
- **Continual Appreciation:** "giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father"
- **Mutual Submission:** "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ"
  - "Wives to your husbands..."
  - "Husbands love your wives..."
  - "Children obey your parents..."
  - "Fathers train your children..."
  - "Slaves obey your masters..."



The phrase translated "be filled with the Spirit" here could be more literally rendered, "be filled **by** the Spirit." This would communicate that the Holy Spirit is the personal means by which we connect with the fullness of the Godhead. Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 reveals that the **content** of Spirit filling is "all the fullness of God (v. 19). Notice how powerful, inspiring and Trinitarian this prayer is:

“For this reason I kneel before **the Father**... I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power **through his Spirit** in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that **Christ** may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup>may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is **the love of Christ**, <sup>19</sup>and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of **all the fullness of God**. <sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup>**to him be glory** in the church and in **Christ Jesus** throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Ephesians 3:14-21

The mind-blowing reality is that the almighty Creator of the universe has chosen to make his home in the hearts of transformed sinners like you and me! The purpose of this filling by the Spirit is **to glorify God** – to reveal the amazing extent of His mercy, goodness and grace.

So our calling as new creations in Christ is to live by the Spirit – to walk with him day by day and moment by moment. Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3 gives some significant clues about how we can experience the fullness of life and joy God longs for us as his dearly loved children.

**The Way of Spirit Filling:** Ephesians 3:14-19

<p>“For this reason I kneel before the Father... I pray that out of his glorious riches <b>he may strengthen you</b> with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <b>may have power</b>, together with all the saints, <b>to grasp</b> how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <b>and to know this love</b> that surpasses knowledge – <b>that you may be filled</b> to the measure of all the fullness of God.”</p>	<b>G</b>	1. Fullness is a <b>gift</b> from God – so we must pray and ask for this gift.
	<b>O</b>	2. Fullness is continual and <b>ongoing</b> – not a one time experience, but a daily pursuit.
	<b>F</b>	3. Fullness is both a <b>fact</b> (Jesus does live in my heart) and a faith goal (I must constantly recognize him and invite him in by faith).
	<b>O</b>	4. Fullness comes from a personal, experiential knowledge of the <b>outpouring</b> of Jesus’ love.
	<b>R</b>	5. Fullness requires divine <b>resources</b> – God’s power – we cannot manufacture it on our own.
	<b>T</b>	6. Fullness is a <b>Trinitarian</b> encounter – seeking the Father, by means of the Spirit, in the personal love of the Son.
	<b>H</b>	7. Fullness is a foretaste of <b>heaven</b> , when we will fully experience the wonder and majesty of God.

## My S.H.A.P.E. for Ministry

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### Spiritual Gift

**1 Cor. 7:7b** : "But each person has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that."

#### **What Am I Gifted To Do?**

### Hear

A passionate inner **compulsion** to do something productive and beneficial to others.

1 Tim. 3:1--"Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task."

#### **What Do I Have A Passion To Do?**

People are rarely fruitful in their ministry unless they have a heart for it, a passion.

### Abilities

Those tendencies and skills an individual has inherited and/or developed through experience and training.

Ex. 31:3 & 4: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts - to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver, and bronze ... and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship."

#### **What Natural Talents & Skills Do I Have?**

### Personality

Unique temperament traits that influence how one works with others and acts in response to circumstances.

**Your ministry will be most effective & fulfilling when you are using your GIFTS and ABILITIES in the area of your HEART'S DESIRE in a way that fits your PERSONALITY and takes advantage of your EXPERIENCES!**

**Am I more oriented toward people or tasks?**

**Do I tend to be more structured or spontaneous?**

**Do I usually prefer up front or behind the scenes ministry?**

### Experiences

Life situations, training and exposure that have allowed you to test your *SHAPE* in the past.

Spiritual experiences – Heb. 5:12-13; Painful experiences – 2 Cor. 1:4

Educational experiences – Prov. 4:13; Ministry experiences – 2 Cor. 9:13

**What experiences has God built into my life to help me serve others?**

## Personal Study 1 – My Place in the Body

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### I. I Belong!

**1 Pet. 2:9-10** – *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”*

**Eph. 2:19** – *“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.”*

**To whom & to what group do I belong?**

**This means I am of value to God and I am now included in God's people – the church!**

II. **I'm Gifted!** You not only belong, you're also gifted.

**I have natural abilities**

Each of us are better at identifying what we are *not* good at rather than what we are. But each of us are filled with natural abilities. Maybe not to the degree that we will excel in them and get recorded in history books - but abilities which can make an eternal difference in the lives of others. We'll talk more about this in later in the seminar.

**As a believer I also have spiritual gifts. I have not been overlooked.**

What do you think a spiritual gift might be? How would you define it?

Often as we look around at people in the church we might conclude: *"I know that a lot of folks in the church have these spiritual gifts, but when God was passing them around, He passed by me."*

If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, this is not so. In each of the four main passages that teach about spiritual gifts it clearly states that every believer has received at least one gift.

**Rm. 12:3,6** -- *"...think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you...We have different gifts, according to the grace given us..."*

**1 Cor. 12:7** -- *"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."*

**Eph. 4:7** -- *"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it."*

**I Pet. 4:10** - "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

**Who has spiritual gifts?**

### III. I'm Valuable!

**I Cor. 12:15-18** - "If the foot should say...not a hand...it would not for that reason cease to be a part of the body. And if the ear should say...not a eye...If the whole body were an eye...But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be."

**What does this metaphor of the body of Christ teach us about our ministry in the church?**

**Eph. 4:13, 16** - "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ...From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

**By exercising my spiritual gifts I will help my church to grow.  
Without my ministry, my church is incomplete.**

### IV. I'm A Minister!

**How many pastors does Grace Evangelical Free Church have?  
About how many ministers does Grace have?**

"(God) has given....pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so the body of Christ may be built up." Eph. 4:11-12

**The pastors are the Preparers/Equippers.**

**The people are the Ministers.**

**What ministry do you believe God has entrusted to you in the body?**

## What is Ministry?

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**Definition: (Greek "diakoneo"= to serve)**

"Ministry is using whatever God has given me to serve Him and the needs of others."

**Read Acts 6:1-7**

Why were the first deacons needed?

On what basis were these men chosen?

What did their service help to facilitate (v. 7)?

## Personal Study 2 - What are Spiritual Gifts?

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***A spiritual gift is a supernatural capacity to develop an ability to serve in a way that produces spiritual results***

A spiritual gift is a capacity to develop an ability to serve others in a special way within the context of the Body of Christ which is sovereignly given by the Holy Spirit to every believer.

**Our English phrase "spiritual gift" is based upon two Greek words in the NT**

The first is found in **1 Cor 12:1**, ***pneumatikos*** = **literally spirituals** or "things of the Spirit"; which means that the gifts are divine in their source. Translators have supplied the word *gifts* to fit the context.

The second word "*gift*" is found for example in **1 Cor 12:4**. The Greek word found here is ***charisma*** or plural ***charismata***. It simply means gift and it is closely related to the word *charis* which means grace. These special abilities for ministry are gifts of God's grace.

**Source = Holy Spirit**

**Nature = spiritual capacity to develop an ability**

**Purpose = to serve others**

## Summary of Biblical Truths

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### 1. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift

**Rm. 12:3; 1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10**

All 4 chapters in which spiritual gifts are listed contain a direct statement stating that each believer has a spiritual gift for service.

- Rm 12:3 "*I say to every person among you... God has allotted to each a measure of faith... vs 6 And since we have gifts that differ... let each exercise them.*"
- 1 Cor 12:7 "*But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*" 12:11 The Spirit "*distributes to each one individually just as He wills.*"
- Eph 4:7 "*But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*" & then the gifts are listed.
- 1 Pet 4:10 "*As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*"

### 2. Only believers have spiritual gifts

**1 Cor. 12:27**--"*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*"

### 3. The Holy Spirit decides what gifts you get

**1 Cor. 12:11, 18**--"*All these are the work of the one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*"

### 4. You can't choose or earn your spiritual gift

**1 Cor. 12:31**--"But eagerly desire the greater gifts"

**Eph 4:7**--"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it."

**5. No single gift is given to everyone**

**1 Cor 12:28-30**--"And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles...Are all apostles?..."

**6. No one receives all the gifts**

**1 Cor 12:15-21**--"...The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!'"

**7. I am to develop the gifts God gives me**

**1 Timothy 4:14-15** "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you ... take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all."  
(NAS)

**A spiritual gift is not an instant ability, but rather a "capacity" to develop an ability.**

**8. Even the same gifts vary in degree from one person to the next**

**Rm. 12:3**--"...think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."

**Mt. 25**--Parable of the Talents

**9. I will be held accountable for the faithful use of my gifts**

**1 Pet 4:10** --"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

**Matthew 25**

**10. Spiritual gifts are not for my edification, but for the benefit of others**

**1 Cor. 12:7**--"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

When we fail to contribute our gifts to the church the result will be an impoverishment.

"Others are the poorer when we do not exercise our gifts. We have been given our capacities for their profit. Nothing but immoral selfishness withholds that which has been designed and provided by our Lord for the profit of others." -- McRae, *Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts*, p. 34.



## 1. Biblical listing of gifts

<b>Rm 12:3-8</b>	<b>1Cor 12:8-10,28-30</b>	<b>Eph 4:11</b>
Prophecy	Word of wisdom	Apostleship
Service (Helps)	Word of knowledge	Prophecy
Teaching	Faith	Evangelism
Exhortation	Healing (3)	Pastoring
Giving	Miracles (3)	Teaching
Leadership	Prophecy (3)	
Mercy	Discernment	
	Tongues (3)	
	Interpretation (2)	
	Apostleship	
	Teaching (2)	
	Helps (Service)	
	Administration	

2. It appears likely that the above 3 lists are not exhaustive but suggestive.

## 3. Categorization of Gifts

a. Peter breaks them into two broad categories (1 Peter 4:11)

### Speaking & Serving

Arrangement in the three lists appears almost haphazard, so can't conclude that any categorization is definite. Some interpret 1 Cor 12:4-6, where three words are used in reference to the gifts--gifts, ministries, effects/manifestations, to mean there are three categories.

b. For study purposes there are a number of helpful ways to categorize the gifts. One such natural way is the following:

<b><u>Support Gifts</u></b>	<b><u>Service Gifts</u></b>	<b><u>Sign Gifts</u></b>
Apostleship	Service	Miracles
Prophecy	Exhortation	Healings
Evangelism	Giving	Tongues
Pastoring (Shepherding)	Leadership	Interpretation of tongues
Teaching	Administration	
	Mercy	
[Equipping Gifts; Eph 4:11-12]	Wisdom	
	Knowledge	
	Faith	
	Discernment	

## Spiritual Gift Definitions

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**A - Apostleship (Contemporary):**

Planting new churches and giving leadership in the initial stages of development until a pastor can assume leadership. (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28)

**B - Prophecy (Contemporary):**

Using God's Word to publicly or privately challenge those in sin to repent. (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12)

**C - Evangelism**

Clearly communicating the gospel to unbelievers beyond one's natural sphere of influence so that many become Jesus' disciples and responsible members of the church. (Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5)

**D - Shepherding (Pastoring)**

Assuming a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of others.

**E - Teaching:**

Clearly explaining and effectively applying God's Word. (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28)

**F - Service (Helps):**

Meeting practical needs of individuals or groups in order to free them to exercise their own spiritual gifts. (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28)

**G - Exhortation:**

Motivating others to godly action, offering encouragement, guidance, and consolation through God's Word. (Rom 12:8)

**H - Giving:**

Liberally and cheerfully using one's own financial resources to further God's work. (Romans 12:8)

**I - Mercy:**

Feeling genuine empathy and compassion for individuals who suffer distressing physical, mental, or emotional problems, and cheerfully reflecting Christ's love to alleviate suffering. (Romans 12:8)

**J - Spiritual Gift Wisdom (Contemporary):**

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by deriving sound principles from a knowledge of God's truths and applying them to vexing situations. (1 Cor 12:8)

**K - Spiritual Gift of Knowledge (Contemporary):**

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by analyzing, systematizing, and summarizing Biblical truth in a manner that assists God's people to obtain deeper insights into divine truth. (1 Cor 12:8)

**L - Spiritual Gift of Faith:**

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by envisioning what God wants to do in seemingly impossible situations, and with extraordinary confidence, trusting God to accomplish His work. (1 Corinthians 12:9)

**M - Spiritual Gift of Discernment:**

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by intuitively sensing the likelihood of doctrinal error or hypocrisy of life and then objectively evaluating if there is. (1 Cor 12:10; 1 Jn 4:1; 1 Thess 5:21; Heb 5:14; Matt 16:23)

**N - Spiritual Gift of Hospitality:**

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by providing an open home along with an open heart to those in need of food, lodging, and fellowship. (1 Peter 4:9)

**O - Spiritual Gift of Administration:**

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by planning, coordinating and organizing people, resources, and time for effective ministry. (1 Cor 12:28)

**P - Spiritual Gift of Leadership:**

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by instilling vision, motivating, and directing others by words and example toward the accomplishment of a ministry objective. (Rom 12:8)

**Q - Spiritual Gift of Cross-Cultural Ministry:**

The capacity and desire to effectively serve God through whatever other spiritual gifts one has in a second culture.

**R - Spiritual Gift of Celibacy:**

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by remaining single without frustration for the express purpose of dedicating an unusual amount of time to ministry and devotions.

➤ **Of these spiritual gifts, which ones do you think might be in your top 3?**

➤ **Ask a close friend what he or she thinks your primary spiritual gift(s) are:**

**1 Pet 4:10** - *As each one has received a special gift, **employ** it in serving one another, as good **stewards** of the manifold grace of God.*

➤ **What does this verse teach us about our spiritual gifts?**

➤ **What is significant about being called stewards or managers of God's grace?**

➤ **How are you currently using your spiritual gifts to build up the body?**

➤ **What could you start to do in order to better employ the gifts God has given you?**

## Lesson 9 - Proclamation

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**Big Idea: our mission as followers of Christ is to make disciples of all nations**

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that all believers are expected to share their faith verbally with others
- Feel – inspired by the grace of God and the beauty of the gospel
- Choose – to pray for an opportunity to share the gospel this week in word and deed

### Discussion Starter:

- **How did you come to faith in Christ? Who shared the gospel with you and helped you understand and respond to it?**
- **Why do we tend to be so reluctant to share our faith with people?**
- **What are some things that encourage and motivate you to share the gospel?**

### **Bible Focus: Matt. 28:18-20**

- **What is the main command in the Great Commission?**

In English, in many translations the first command appears to be “Go.” But in the Greek this verb is a participle that modifies the main verb: “**make disciples.**” So a more accurate grammatical rendering would be, “as you go, make disciples.” Two other participles also modify this main verb: “baptizing them... and teaching them to obey.” Baptism was the public demonstration of conversion – the way a person announced that he had become a disciple of Jesus (as opposed to Rabbi Gamaliel or John the Baptist). And the teaching was not to be simply passing along information but training disciples to obey all that Jesus had commanded. All of this was followed by the promise that would make obedience possible: Jesus’ presence all the way to the end!

The Great Commission provides a fitting and inspiring conclusion to Matthew's gospel. But Jesus said many other things to his followers during the 40 days between his resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:3). According to Luke, Jesus' final words were another promise of his presence and another exhortation to spread the word: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Those four geographic markers provide a structure for the unfolding story in Acts. The Word of God – the good news about Jesus – advances throughout Jerusalem (Acts 1-7) into Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12) and then to the ends of the known world at that time (Acts 13-28).

“The place to begin is where people are open to the Spirit of God. There is no point in trying to kick open a locked door. Go where there is evidence of spiritual renewal and work out from there as the Spirit prepares the way.”

Robert Coleman

*The Master's Way of Personal Evangelism*, p. 26

There are two keys to this powerful advance of the gospel:

- 1) The Holy Spirit's **power**, activated through **prayer** and
- 2) The bold **proclamation** of believers, even (or especially) in **persecution**

## **The Spirit's Power & Prayer**

For each passage below mark down who prayed and what happened soon after:

<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Who Prayed</b>	<b>What Happened</b>
Luke 1:13	Zechariah	Birth of John announced
<b>Luke 3:21</b>	Jesus	Baptism, Holy Spirit descends
<b>Luke 6:12</b>	Jesus	Calling of the 12
Luke 9:28	Jesus	Transfiguration
<b>Luke 22:39</b>	Jesus	Crucifixion
<b>Acts 1:14,24</b>	Believers	Chose Matthias, Holy Spirit came
Acts 2:42	Believers	Shared possessions
Acts 4:31	Believers	Place shaken, given boldness
<b>Acts 8:15</b>	Peter & John	Samaritans receive Holy Spirit
Acts 9:11	Saul	Called as an apostle
<b>Acts 10:2</b>	Cornelius	Gentiles receive Holy Spirit
Acts 12:5	Believers	Peter set free from prison
<b>Acts 13:3</b>	Believers	Paul and Barnabas sent as missionaries
Acts 14:23	Believers	Elders appointed in churches
Acts 16:25	Paul and Silas	Released from prison, jailer and family saved
Acts 20:36	Ephesians	Send Paul on to Jerusalem (and death)
<b>Acts 28:8</b>	Paul	Healed official's father, many healed on island

Luke makes the connection between prayer and the Holy Spirit unmistakable. At every critical turning point in the narrative someone prays and the Spirit's power is unleashed in a new way. A pastor friend of mine frequently says, "Much prayer, much power." Christian leaders throughout history have testified to this principle.

- **How have you experienced the connection between prayer and the Holy Spirit's presence and power in your life and witness?**
  
- **Why do you think God set it up this way** – using prayer as our means to access the Spirit's power? [I think it has everything to do with humility and dependence on the Father – 2 Chr. 7:14; "humble exalted,"; "I do nothing apart from my Father's will," etc.]
  
- **Why do we so often neglect or put off what should be our first priority – prayer?**

## **Believers' Proclamation & Persecution**

Our mission as Jesus' followers is to make disciples of all nations. This will involve going, baptizing and teaching them to obey. But in his last words to his disciples, Jesus expanded on their mission by saying, "You will be my witnesses..." This phrase drew upon a longstanding legal tradition in the Old Testament. Altars were set up as visible "witnesses" of agreements between people and tribes (Gen. 31:44,48). The judicial system required two or three witnesses to convict of serious crimes (Num. 35:30). The book of the Law itself was a witness against the people (Deut. 31:26), that they knew the truth and had agreed to obey God's commands. The word was always used in this kind of legal, covenantal sense – until Isaiah.

**Isaiah** was a prophet during the reign of King Hezekiah in Jerusalem, when the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel and took those ten tribes into exile (2 Kings 17). God graciously spared Hezekiah and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, in response to their humble pleas (2 Kings 19:1). Isaiah's prophecies mix dark foreboding of coming judgment with joy-filled visions of Israel's coming deliverance by the Servant of the LORD. His book has two major parts – chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66. The second part opens with words of "comfort" for God's people (40:1), followed by the familiar prophecy of the forerunner who would prepare the way for the Lord's coming (40:3-5; Luke 3:4-6). "The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it" (40:5). Then a command is given to "cry out," to declare that the lives of men are fleeting (40:6-8), but God's word stands forever. And His Word is good news that His faithful will stand up and shout saying, "Here is your God!" (40:9-10). That chapter closes with some of the most beautiful poetry in Scripture – describing the LORD as "the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth... He gives strength to the weary... those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles." (40:28-31).

Isaiah 41 describes the sovereignty and power of the LORD over kings and the course of history – foretelling events long before they take place (41:26). Israel is presented as the "servant" of the LORD, the chosen one that God will uphold and deliver (41:8-10,14). The Servant is further described in 42 as one anointed by the Spirit to "bring justice to the nations" (42:1,4). In language foreshadowing chapter 61 (that Jesus quotes as his mission statement in Luke 4), the Servant will be a "covenant for the people and a light to the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives..." (42:6-7).

### **The Glory of the Lord will be revealed to all men** (40:5)

- Good news will be proclaimed that the LORD is here (40:9-10)!
  - **PROTECTION:** The "servant" of the LORD (God's faithful people) will be upheld and delivered from enemies (41:8-14)
  - **SALVATION:** The "Servant" of the LORD (Messiah) will bring justice to the nations, as a covenant for his people and a light to the gentiles (42:1-7) through his sacrificial suffering on their behalf (Is. 53)
  - **PROCLAMATION:** God has called witnesses to testify on His behalf, that He alone is God and there is no other (43:9-11; 44:8).

"Humans, no matter how faithful, passionate, or ingenious, can't save a soul. God has to do it... God doesn't need my help... If we will firmly believe that God has to do it, we will also be free to accept His incredible invitation to be involved."

Dave & Judy Brower  
*Pray & Watch*, pp. 53,57,59

## Read Isaiah 43:1-13

- What does God say to His people in v.1?
- What does God promise His people in v. 2?
- What does He promise in vv. 5-7?
- What are the witnesses from the nations called out to prove in v. 9?
- What are God's witnesses called on to prove in v. 10?
- What makes God absolutely unique (vv. 11-13)?
- What does God further promise in 44:2-3?
- What further proof for His uniqueness does God provide in 44:6-8?

## 2 Kinds of Witnesses:

1. **LEGAL:** The basic meaning for the term “witness” (Greek: *martus*) is eye-witness – one who has seen or experienced something firsthand and so can testify to the fact that it occurred.
2. **CONFESSIONAL:** But even in the Old Testament the word takes on a broader meaning (in Is. 43 & 44) to include the spiritual convictions of people based on their faith (which, in the case of the LORD, is well supported by eye-witness experiences).

In the New Testament we see these two concepts combined in the first generation of apostles (Luke 24:44,48; Acts 1:22). Paul was only an eye-witness through spiritual visions, but was the prominent preacher in Acts as a “witness for Christ” (Acts 22:15). Similarly, Stephen was called a witness (Acts 22:20 - *marturos*), though there is no evidence he was among those who saw the risen Christ firsthand. And for his testimony, like many prophets before him, he was killed (Acts 7:58). Thus, over time, the word “witness” came to mean “martyr”: one who testifies for Jesus and is executed for it.

Just as opposition to Jesus increased throughout his public ministry, so opposition to the gospel and its preachers increased in the book of Acts. God's

“If what matters most is people finding Jesus, then it means trading in our everyday lives in the context of time to find real life in the context of eternity! It means using every circumstance of life to remind us that time is nothing, eternity is everything, and the people around us need Jesus. It matters more. More than my pain, more than my joy, more than my success, more than my failure, more than my marriage, more than my house or my job, even more than raising nice kids.”

Neal & Judy Brower  
*Pray & Watch*, p. 31

prophets have always faced persecution for delivering His message of repentance. (It was the false prophets who got all the applause – Luke 6:26.) The theme of persecution runs all the way through Acts, often intersecting with the themes of prayer and the Spirit's power.

In Acts 12:1-2 we see King Herod executing James, the brother of John. Peter is thrown in prison, but in response to the prayer of God's people, an angel sets him free (this time it's the guards who get executed – 12:19). But look at this striking contrast:

**Read Acts 12:21-25**

- What happened to King Herod? Why? (vv. 21-23)
- In immediate contrast, what happened with the word of God? (v. 24)
- What is the significance of these contrasting observations?

## The Word Advances in ACTS

**Is there a connection between the growth of the church and opposition to the gospel?**

Are Christians, in a sense, more “blessed” when they are hated, persecuted, rejected and scorned?

Previous Occurrence	Growth Result
Jesus' resurrection & ascension	<b>120</b> ref in 1:15; addition of Matthias to complete the 12
Peter's speech at Pentecost	3000 Jewish “souls” were added to their number (2:41) “So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about <b>three thousand</b> souls” (2:41).
	The Lord added daily, those being saved (2:47) “praising God and having <b>favor with all the people</b> . And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved” (2:47)
<b>Peter &amp; John arrested</b> for preaching boldly and healing man	“But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about <b>five thousand</b> ” (4:4)
	Full number were one in heart and soul – shared everything “ <b>great grace</b> was upon them all” (4:33)
Barnabas gives gift, Ananias & Saphira withhold part and die	“And <b>great fear</b> came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things (5:11)
Signs and wonders done	“None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in <b>high esteem</b> . And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, <b>multitudes</b> of both men and women” (5:14)
Sanhedrin <b>reprimand and beating</b>	“Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name” (5:41)
Complaint emerged among Hellenist widows:	“Now in these days when the disciples were <b>increasing</b> in number...” (6:1)
Having chosen the 7 to come alongside the apostles in service	“ <b>And the word of God continued to increase</b> , and the number of the disciples <b>multiplied greatly</b> in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith” (6:7)



<b>Opposition</b> to Stephen → martyrdom... (ch. 7).	"Now when they heard these things they were <b>enraged</b> , and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (7:54-55).
<b>Great persecution</b> broke out → scattered (ch. 8)	Philip → Samaria – proclaimed the Christ many paid attention b/c of the signs → "So there was much joy in that city" (8:8).
Saul converted and begins to preach, <b>opposed and flees</b>	"So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it <b>multiplied</b> " (9:31).
Peter restores Dorcas to life	"And it became known throughout all Joppa, and <b>many</b> believed in the Lord" (9:42).
Peter preaches to the Gentiles in Cornelius' home	"While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word" (10:44).
Circumcized party (who had also "received the word" 11:1) <b>opposed Peter</b> – he explained	"When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life" (11:18).
Men of Cyprus and Cyrene, scattered in the <b>persecution</b> , preached even to Hellenists	"And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a <b>great number</b> who believed turned to the Lord" (11:21).
Apostles sent Barnabas, a good man...	"And a <b>great many people</b> were added to the Lord" (11:24).
Barnabas got Saul	"For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians" (11:25).
Herod <b>killed James; seized Peter</b> and put him in prison; Angel struck him down b/c he did not give glory to God	" <b>But the word of the Lord increased and multiplied</b> " (12:24).
Paul & Barnabas preach in Pisidia Antioch – <b>Jews rise up to oppose</b> them, so they turn to the Gentiles, who rejoice. The Jews stir up <b>persecution</b> , so they move on to Iconium.	" <b>And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region...</b> And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit" (13:49,52).
Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and persuaded the crowds to <b>stone Paul</b> .	"When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made <b>many</b> disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (14:21).
Paul and Silas deliver the decisions from Jerusalem about including the Gentiles.	"So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they <b>increased in numbers daily</b> " (16:5)
<b>Paul and Silas beaten</b> and thrown in prison, preach the word to the jailer.	"And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God" (16:34)
Mob in Thessalonica <b>threw Paul and Silas out</b> , who went to Berea to preach the Word, where it was received. Then the Jews came from Thes. And stirred up the crowds there in Berea.	" <b>Many</b> of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men" (17:12).
Some philosophers in Athens <b>mocked Paul</b> , but others listened.	"But <b>some</b> men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them" (17:34).
Jews in Corinth <b>opposed and reviled Paul</b> , so he went next door, turning again to the	"Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And <b>many</b> of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized"

Gentiles.	(18:8).	
Paul returned to Ephesus (as he had hoped) and prayed that they would receive the Holy Spirit. For 3 months he tried to persuade the Jews there, but some became stubborn, refusing to believe and speaking evil of the Way – so he turned again to a secular lecture hall.		"This continued for two years, so that <b>all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord</b> , both Jews and Greeks" (19:10).
7 sons of Sceva <b>beaten up</b> , trying to use the names of Jesus and Paul to drive out demons. Fear fell on everyone in Ephesus and led to mass confession and burning of scrolls and magical items.		"So the word of the Lord continued to <b>increase and prevail mightily</b> " (19:20).
<p>22And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that <b>imprisonment and afflictions await me</b>. 24<b>But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.</b> (20:22-24)</p> <p>13Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready <b>not only to be imprisoned but even to die</b> in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (21:13)</p>		
Jews from Asia seize Paul, <b>lock him in the temple and try to kill him</b> , beating him. Roman soldiers intervene, arresting him, binding him with 2 chains and sending him to the barracks.		Acts 22 sermon to crowd in Jerusalem.
Paul was nearly flogged with whips, but revealed his Roman citizenship.		Acts 23 provocative message to Pharisees and Sadducees.
After Paul stirs up the Pharisees against the Sadducees and the Tribune has to rescue him, the Jews form <b>a plot not to eat or drink until they killed him</b> . But Paul's nephew heard of it and the Tribune sent him to Caesarea with a strong escort.		
Paul is taken as <b>prisoner</b> to Governor Felix in Caesarea. The high priest and other Jews accuse him of stirring up riots and profaning the temple.		Acts 24 testimony before Felix and his court.
Paul is left in prison for 2 years, the new Governor, Festus leaves him in prison as a favor to the Jews. The Jews again plan an ambush to kill Paul, and Festus tried to expose him, but he appealed to Casear.		Acts 25 testimony before Festus, then Acts 26 testimony before King Agrippa and Bernice and their court.
Ignoring Paul's pleas to avoid the dangerous season for sailing, the ship's voyage to Rome runs into a fierce storm. For 14 days they fight the storm, eating nothing. Some soldiers tried to escape on their own, but the Centurion trusted Paul and kept them together. Others tried to kill the prisoners, but again the Centurion kept Paul alive.		
After reaching the island of Malta safely, Paul is bitten by a snake – making the natives think he must be cursed. But he survives the snake bite and they then conclude he must be a god. Paul healed an island leader, then many others.		"And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. 10They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed" (28:9-10).
Paul testified to the Jews in Rome.		"And <b>some</b> were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved" (28:24).
<b>The Jews reject Paul</b> and the gospel, so Paul once again turns to the Gentiles, quoting Isaiah's prophecy that the people would reject the salvation of God.		"He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (28:30-31).

## **Personal Study 1 – Jesus' Missionary Method**

When Jesus sent his disciples out ahead of him to proclaim the kingdom and prepare towns for his arrival, he provided some essential principles for evangelism and missions. Since our commission from Jesus himself is still to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:18-20), we would be wise to accomplish this mission by following the lead of our master!

**Read It!** Luke 10:1-12

### **Study It!**

- How did Jesus send his disciples out? (10:1 – i.e. were they alone on the mission?)
  
- Where did he send them? (10:1)
  
- What key principles do you see in 10:2?
  
- What kind of expectations did he give his disciples? (10:3)
  
- What significance is in the specific instructions? (10:4)
  
- What does a “man of peace” provide for the missionaries? (10:5-7)
  
- What are their instructions when welcomed in a town? (10:8-9)
  
- What are their instructions when they are not welcomed? (10:10-12)

### **Apply It!**

- What is the role of prayer in evangelism and missions?
  
- What kind of response should we expect as we share the gospel with people?
  
- What principles should guide our approach to evangelism?
  
- For whom is God calling you to pray today? Remember to Pray and WATCH for opportunities the Lord will bring to share the good news with those around you!

## **Personal Study 2 – Paul’s Missionary Method**

Luke, the physician and companion of Paul, wrote both the gospel that bears his name and the Acts of the Apostles. These two volumes were meant to be read and studied together (Acts 1:1-2), as the second clearly builds on and completes the stories and themes introduced in the first. In the gospel of Luke, as Jesus’ teaching ministry grows opposition builds until he is finally killed in Jerusalem. Likewise in Acts, as Paul’s missionary preaching spreads the gospel throughout the known world, persecution increases until he is finally imprisoned in Jerusalem (and then sent off to Rome). But nothing can stop the advance of God’s Word (6:7; 12:24; 19:20).

Today, let’s study Paul’s approach to sharing the gospel on his first missionary journey.

**Read It!** Acts 13:1-5; 14:1-7, 21-28

### **Study It!**

- How were Barnabas and Saul identified and sent out as missionaries? (13:3)
  
- They were sent out by the church at Antioch, but who really sent them? (13:4)
  
- Where did they start their proclamation of the Word of God? (13:5; 14:1) Why there, in Jewish synagogues? (13:46; Rom. 1:16)
  
- What was the typical response to their preaching? (14:1-2)
  
- What role did signs and wonders play in their ministry? (14:3)
  
- How did they respond to persecution? (14:5-7)
  
- After winning some converts, how did they follow up later? (14:21-22)
  
- What was the result of their missionary work? (14:23; in other words – what was the connection between gospel-preaching and church-planting?)

### **Apply It!**

- What is the role of prayer in sending missionaries and going as missionaries?
  
- What kind of response should we expect as we share the gospel?
  
- What principles should guide our approach to evangelism?
  
- For whom is God calling you to pray today? Remember to Pray and WATCH for opportunities the Lord will bring to share the good news with those around you!

## **Personal Study 3 – Paul’s Gospel Message**

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As we proclaim the gospel in order to make disciples, we must balance two critical tasks: accurately explaining the true message of Jesus and effectively engaging our target audience. We must never compromise the truth of the gospel. But we do have to consider how to convey the data points of the message in ways that people can understand and relate to (this is called **contextualizing** the message). This doesn't mean we will never offend people – the very nature of the gospel is offensive to the self-righteous. But it does mean that we should be sensitive to the cultural setting we are in and the religious background of the people we are addressing.

**Read It!** Acts 13:13-41

### **Study It!**

- Where and when did Paul and his team start their preaching ministry? (13:14)

Keep in mind that Paul was trained as a Pharisee (Acts 22:3), and so would have been recognized as an authorized Rabbinical teacher in all Jewish synagogues. This provided an open door for preaching ministry all over the known world – since the Jewish people had been scattered around the Mediterranean for hundreds of years, and wherever they gathered, a synagogue was established!

- To whom is Paul speaking? (13:16)
- How does Paul open his message? (13:17-22) Why do you think this was effective with this particular audience?
- Based on this Jewish foundation, how does Paul introduce the gospel? (13:23-25)
- What are the essential data points of the gospel message that Paul communicates? (13:26-33; 38-39)
- How does Paul support his message? (13:25,27,31,33-35)
- How does Paul drive home his message? (13:40)
- For further study – explore how different people responded to this preaching (13:42-52)

### **Apply It!**

- How would you sum up the essential elements of the gospel – the data points that must be expressed to truthfully and accurately communicate the way of salvation God has provided?
  
- How did Paul contextualize the gospel for the audience in Pisidian Antioch? How did he make it relevant and understandable for them?
  
- How do you think Paul measured his success? (e.g. 13:48-52)
  
- As you think about someone you are praying to share the gospel with – how could you make the gospel clear for them, based on their culture and background?
  
- What are your goals for evangelism this year? How will you measure your success?

## Lesson 10 - Demonstration

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**Big Idea: the loving actions of believers should powerfully support our proclamation of the gospel**

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that God is concerned about the poor and suffering, so we should be
- Feel – challenged to build a relationship across socio-economic lines
- Choose – to pray for an opportunity to share the gospel this week in word and deed

### Discussion Starter:

- **What is the clearest image in your mind of poverty? When have you most clearly seen this tragic reality for yourself? How did it affect you?**
- **What is the church's responsibility toward the poor? What is the believer's responsibility to the poor?**
- **When have you seen holistic ministry in action – ministering the gospel in both word and deed?**

### Bible Study – Poverty and Justice

- **Does care for the poor affect someone's salvation?** Be careful! This is a trick question... What principles emerge from each of these passages?

- Matt. 25:31-46 – judgment – what we do, and fail to do, will play into our judgment. How does this fit with our understanding of “no condemnation” (Rom. 8:1), etc.?
- Luke 16:19-31 – the rich man and Lazarus – he failed to *repent* – so it was not just his wealth, but his failure to do anything to help someone right in front of him.
- 1 John 3:17 – love for others, especially other believers, *demonstrates* love for God. So the failure to love others reveals the absence of love for God.

“If God’s Word is true, then the United States today stands in blatant defiance against God’s norms for society. Anyone who seeks to be biblical must demand an end to the scandal of poverty in the richest nation on earth.”

Ron Sider, *Just Generosity*, p. 75

Scripture is clear on two things related to judgment: 1) each person will be judged according to what he or she has done (Rev. 20:12); 2) our eternal fate is not based on our works but on our relationship with Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:15; John 3:36, etc.). We know that “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). But we also know that our works, as believers, will be tested with fire, “and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work” (1 Cor. 3:13). **So during our short time on earth, we are to be faithful stewards of every resource God has given us** (e.g. Matt. 25:21).

- **How central to Jesus' mission and ministry was ministry to the poor and marginalized** (Luke 4:18-19; 6:20-26)?
  - How did Jesus view his own mission (Luke 19:10)?
  - Who was Jesus' target audience (Luke 5:31-32)?
  
- **Is care for the poor limited to the community of God's people?** (e.g. Lev. 25; Deut. 15)
  - Is there a priority toward God's people? (Gal. 6:2,5,10)
  - What is the responsibility of family members? (e.g. Ruth, 3,4; 1 Tim. 5:16)
  - What is the proper role of government? (Rom. 13; 1 Kings 10:9)
  - How big a deal is the way we treat the poor among us? (What was the primary reason God sent his people into exile? See Amos 2:7; 5:11; 6:4,7; 7:11,17; Is. 10:1-3; Mic. 2:2; 3:12; Jer. 5:26-29.)

Check out this excerpt from Ron Sider's excellent book, *Just Generosity* (p. 69):

The Pentateuch provides at least five important provisions designed to help those who could not help themselves:

1. The third year tithe was to go to poor widows, orphans, and sojourners, as well as the Levites (Deut. 14:28-29; 26:12).
2. Laws on gleaning stipulated that the corners of the grain fields and the sheaves and grapes that dropped were to be left for the poor, especially widows, orphans, and sojourners (Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 24:19-21).
3. Every seventh year, fields were to remain fallow and the poor were allowed to reap the natural growth (Ex. 23:10-11; Lev. 25:1-7).
4. A zero-interest loan was to be available to the poor, and if the balance was not repaid by the sabbatical year, it was forgiven (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:35-38; Deut. 15:1-11).
5. Israelites who became slaves to repay debts went free in the seventh year (Ex. 21:1-11; Lev. 25:47-53; Deut. 15:12-18). And when the freed slaves left, God commanded, their temporary 'master' was obligated to provide liberally, giving the former slaves cattle, grain, and wine (Deut. 15:14) so they could again earn their own way.

The bottom line for us as followers of Christ is that we are called to walk as he walked, to "follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Jesus spent most of his time with uneducated



fishermen, formerly sinful tax-collectors and prostitutes. He touched and ate with people that no one else would go near. He brought the good news of the kingdom to the people that were hungriest for it – and he demonstrated the truth and power of the message he proclaimed by literally letting himself be killed for others. The way of Jesus is the way of the cross (Luke 9:23)– the way of sacrifice and suffering. All other allegiances, even within our families, must be yielded to our rabbi and master (Luke 14:26). These are difficult teachings – but Jesus made no apologies. In fact, the message of the kingdom is so much better than anything this world has to offer, we should REJOICE to surrender everything for the joy and satisfaction of pleasing our King.

Several books have come out recently addressing especially evangelicals on this very issue:

- **Just Generosity** by Ron Sider (1999)
- **The Irresistible Revolution** by Shane Claiborne (2006)
- **Crazy Love** by Francis Chan (2008)
- **Radical** by David Platt (2009)
- **When Helping Hurts** by Fikkert and Corbett (2009)

Coming into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most fundamental believers were so focused on distancing themselves from liberals that were watering down the gospel that they moved away from virtually all ministries that smacked of liberalism – ministries like poverty relief. At the end of that century there was a resurgence among evangelicals to re-engage the world we live in, making a real, tangible difference in Jesus' name. Now most evangelical missions and many evangelical churches are actively pursuing “holistic” ministries that address both the physical and spiritual needs of people. We move into peoples' lives with both the **proclamation** of the gospel and a **demonstration** of God's love in Christ.

- How have you seen this balance of proclamation and demonstration, of words and actions, effectively minister to lost people?
  
- How has our church, in the past, tried to show the love of Christ in practical ways?
  
- What are some ways we could – as individuals or as a church – better demonstrate the love of Christ for our “neighbors” in town?

## Personal Study 1 – The Rich and Poor

Jesus said more about money than he did about heaven and hell. You might say that money is the “window to the soul.” Luke, in his gospel account, places an even stronger emphasis on Jesus’ view of the rich and poor than the other gospel writers. A comparison of the Beatitudes in Matthew and Luke reveals a striking difference in what each writer was communicating, under the Spirit’s inspiration:

### Read It & Study It!

<b>Matthew 5:3-10</b>	<b>Luke 6:20-26</b>
<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.	<sup>21</sup> Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.
<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.	<sup>22</sup> Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.
<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.	<sup>23</sup> “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.
<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.	<sup>24</sup> “But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.
<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.	<sup>25</sup> Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.
<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.	<sup>26</sup> Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.
<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	

Most scholars today have concluded that Jesus delivered similar sermons at two different places and times. Matthew’s account is called the “sermon on the mount,” and Luke’s is the “sermon on the plain,” based on the descriptive notes each author supplies about the events.

- What similarities are there between these two sets of “beatitudes” or blessings?
- What differences do you see?
- What significance do you find in those differences?

- In Luke's passage, what is the connection between wealth and popularity, poverty and persecution?
- What is it about being "rich, fat, happy, and cool" that can be spiritually dangerous?
- What is it about being a "poor, hungry, sad reject" that can be spiritually helpful?

### **Apply It!**

- What is most convicting or challenging to you as you read these beatitudes?
- What is most encouraging?
- What does your current use of money reveal about your soul? Would God say that you are blessed, or would he say, "Woe to you..."?

## Personal Study 2 – Reversals

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Luke's theme of ministry to the poor is rooted in his presentation of the kingdom as a place where roles are reversed – where the humble are exalted (Mary – 1:52) and the great are brought low (Zechariah – 1:20; Herod – Acts 12:23). The term, “poor” came to mean “oppressed” in the Old Testament, since they were vulnerable to the exploitation of the rich. So being poor, in this context, conveys more than material lack of resources, but an overall weakness that leads to dependence on the Lord. (This background goes a long way to explaining Matthew's, “poor in spirit.”) Notice how the “rich fool” loses everything when he dies (Luke 12:13-21), while the disciples – who have given up everything – will be cared for by God (Luke 12:22-34). At a dinner party, Jesus used seat assignments as an object lesson about how honor will be assigned at the coming Messianic banquet – “for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 14:11). But the clearest and most alarming role reversal is recounted in Luke 16. [Note: these observations are adapted from I. Howard Marshall's excellent book, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*.]

**Read It!** Luke 16:19-31

### Study It!

- How is the rich man described (v. 19)?
- How is the beggar described (v. 20-21)?
- What happened to both men (v. 22)?
- Where were the two men taken (vv. 22-23)?
- How is the rich man described after he died? (vv. 23-24)
- According to Abraham's response, why is the rich man in hell? (v. 25)
- What can be done for people who are in hell (v. 26)?
- What was the rich man's request (vv. 27-28,30)?
- By his own admission, what did the rich man fail to do in his lifetime (v. 30)?
- What do you think he needed to repent of (stop doing)?
- What does Abraham's final response foreshadow about the response people would have to Jesus (v. 31)?

## Apply It!

- Is your current life situation more like the rich man or Lazarus?
  
- How many people do you know (or know about) that are currently living in poverty and misery?
  
- What do you feel the Holy Spirit may be prompting you to do in response to this study?

## Personal Study 3 – Jesus' Mission

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Jesus stood up in his hometown, read from Isaiah's scroll and then pronounced, "Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). He clearly saw his life and ministry as the fulfillment of prophetic expectations (Luke 24:44). Much of this fulfillment in Isaiah (and then in Luke) is seen in reversals: prisoners set free, blind receive sight, poor hear good news, the oppressed receive justice (Is. 61). And Jesus validated his ministry by pointing to the fact that he was doing these very things (Luke 7:21-22). The long-awaited restoration of the "kingdom" to Israel had arrived in the person and work of Jesus! His followers would quickly learn that while the kingdom had come in a spiritual sense – with Jesus reigning in the hearts of his people – the final consummation of perfect justice and peace would await his second coming. So now, as we await the return of our King, we labor and strive to offer his abounding love to those around us – a love that cannot help but touch them at their point of need.

## Read It & Study It!

- Luke 4:18-19 – What was Jesus anointed and sent to do? (Read Is. 61 for more details):
  
- Luke 7:22 – What evidence did Jesus give to prove he was the Messiah?
  
- In Luke 5 & 7, what kinds of people did Jesus get involved with? What did he do for each of them?
  - 5:12 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5:18 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5:27 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7:2 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7:11 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7:12 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7:37 \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 7:34,39 - How did the religious leaders view Jesus' interaction with these people?

## Apply It!

It has long been observed that Jesus paid special attention to outsiders – to those pushed aside who tended to be ignored or abused: lepers, prostitutes, tax-collectors, cripples, sinners... At least some of the reason for this is found in the fact that they were “poor” in the sense of being very aware of their need for help – both physically and spiritually. Jesus explained his behavior saying, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:31-32). And he did not keep people at arm’s length, but touched the untouchable and invited “unclean” sinners into intimate table fellowship (5:30).

- As followers of Jesus, with what kinds of people should we seek to build relationships?
  
- If we follow Jesus' example, what kinds of ministries might we develop to reach out to these outsiders?
  
- What kinds of results should we expect from this kind of ministry? (See Luke 14:12-14).
  
- What is one step you could take today, to demonstrate the love of Christ to someone?

## Lesson 11 – Disciple-Making

**Big Idea: the key to changing the world for Christ is investing in a few disciples, who will become disciple-makers**

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that reaching large crowds is not as important as effectively building into a few faithful disciples
- Feel – encouraged that exponential change is possible through Jesus' strategy
- Choose – to select and invest in one or two people to start training

### Discussion Starter:

- **What were the first things Jesus did in his earthly ministry?** [Selected and called young men to come and be his disciples.]
- **On what basis did Jesus choose his disciples?** What does it appear he was looking for? [It was not their religious training or background... If anything it was their interest in and openness to him as Rabbi.]
- **With whom did Jesus spend most of his time?** Why do you think he invested his time in this way? [12 disciples, especially 3. He was developing leaders, training them to take over when he left.]
- **What was Jesus' usual approach with large crowds of people?** How did he feel about them? How did he treat them? [He was concerned about and compassionate toward the crowds – healing and teaching them. But he did not cater to their desires to see amazing things, and he often taught difficult things to filter out the uncommitted.]

“One must decide where he wants his ministry to count – in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men who will carry on his work after he has gone. Really it is a question of which generation we are living for.”

Robert Coleman

*The Master Plan of Evangelism p. 39*

### The Master Plan of Evangelism (Robert Coleman)

#### 1. Selection

- “Jesus concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow.” (27)

- “One cannot transform a world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be transformed except as they are molded in the hands of the Master.” (30)

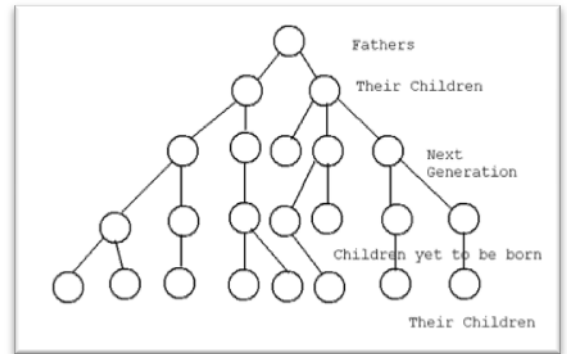
#### 2. Association

- “Having called his men, Jesus made a practice of being with them. This was the essence of his training program – just letting his disciples follow him...He was his own school and curriculum.” (41)
- “There is simply no substitute for getting with people, and it is ridiculous to imagine that anything less, short or a miracle, can develop strong Christian leadership.” (49)

- “With Jesus’ ministry, “knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation... One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations.” (42)

### 3. Consecration

- “It soon became apparent that being a disciple of Christ involved far more than a joyful acceptance of the Messianic promise: it meant the surrender of one’s whole life to the Master in absolute submission to his sovereignty.”(52)
- The example of obedience: “The cross was but the crowning climax of Jesus’ commitment to do the will of God. It forever showed that obedience could not be compromised – it was always a commitment unto death.” (57)
- The importance of obedience: “...no one can ever be a leader until first he has learned to follow a leader.” (58)



### 4. Impartation

- “That is why he lost no opportunity to impress on his followers the deep compulsion of his own soul aflame with the love of God for a lost world. Everything he did and said was motivated by this consuming passion. His life was simply the revelation in time of God’s eternal purpose to save for himself a people. Supremely this is what the disciples needed to learn, not in theory, but in practice.”(62)
- “In this light, evangelism was not interpreted as a human undertaking, but as a divine project which had been going on from the beginning and would continue until God’s purpose was fulfilled. It was altogether the Spirit’s work. All the disciples were asked to do was to let the Spirit have complete charge of their lives.”
- “The very ability to give away our life in Christ is the proof of its possession...The Spirit of God always insists on making Christ known.” (67,69)

### 5. Demonstration

- “(Jesus) did not ask anyone to do or be anything which first he had not demonstrated in His own life, thereby not only proving its workability, but its relevance to his mission in life.” (76)

### 6. Delegation

- “Jesus was always building his ministry for the time when his disciples would have to take over his work, and go out into the world with the redeeming gospel.” (79)
- “Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do. It is the commission of the church which gives meaning to all else that is undertaken in the name of Christ.” (88)



## 7. Supervision

- “Jesus made it a point to meet with his disciples following their tours of service to hear their reports and to share with them the blessedness of his ministry in doing the same thing. In this sense, one might say that his teaching rotated between instruction and assignment. What time he was with them, he was helping them to understand the reason for some previous action or getting them ready for some new experience. His questions, illustrations, warnings, and admonitions were calculated to bring out those things that they needed to know in order to fulfill his work, which was the evangelization of the world.” (89)
- “He did not expect more from his disciples than they could do, but he did expect their best, and this he expected always to be improved as they grew in knowledge and grace. His plan of teaching, by example, assignment, and constant checkup, was calculated to bring out the best that was in them.” (94)
- “It is crucial that those engaging in the work of evangelism have personal supervision and guidance until such time as they are matured enough to carry on alone.” (95)

## 8. Reproduction

- “Jesus intended for the disciples to produce his likeness in and through the church being gathered out of the world. Thus his ministry in the Spirit would be duplicated many-fold by his ministry in the lives of his disciples.” (97)
- “This is the new evangelism we need...men and women who want only for Christ to produce his life in and through them according to his won good pleasure.” (105-6)

“The wandering masses of the world must have a demonstration of what to believe—they must have a mentor who will stand among them and say, ‘Follow me, I know the way’...Yet we must realize that the kind of energy that Christ needs does not happen by accident...If we are to train people, we must work for them. We must seek them. We must win them. Above all, we must pray for them...wherever they are, they must be reached and trained to become effective witnesses of our Lord.”(109-110)

### **Bible Focus: John 1:35-42**

- **What did Andrew conclude about Jesus based on John’s assertion that he was “the Lamb of God?”** (v. 41; vv. 27,29,30,32-34) How important was John’s testimony about Jesus in the calling of the first disciples? [John had very much “prepared the way” for Jesus, at least with Andrew, and probably with several others.]

“Disciples must be brought to maturity. There can be no substitute for total victory, and our field is the world. We have not been called to hold the fort, but to storm the heights.”

Robert Coleman  
*The Master Plan of Evangelism p. 95*

- **How well did Andrew and Simon know Jesus before he called them from their boats?** (see Mark 1:16-20; Matt. 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11)

- **We often talk about someone “receiving Jesus,” – is that an accurate way to describe what happened with the calling of the 12 disciples?** What is a better way? [Responding to Jesus’ call; Jesus receiving them to be his disciples! SELECTION!]
- **How did Simon hear about Jesus?** (v. 40-41)
- **In these and other passages, how do you see the principles of Selection, Association, Consecration and Impartation at work in Jesus’ ministry?**

**Group Discussion:**

- Let’s focus on the first four of the eight principles Coleman outlines. **Do you agree or disagree with his premise – that Jesus’ strategy was to invest in a few, rather than reaching the masses?**
- **How have you seen the first 4 principles applied in a church, ministry or discipling relationship?**
- **Who do you know at our church that is an active disciple-maker, meeting with and investing in a few disciples?**
- **How much of our time and energy as a church, and as individuals, is devoted to programs to reach the masses as opposed to investing in the training of a few faithful disciples?** Does this reality need to be evaluated and possibly adjusted?

“The aim of Christian ministry is not to build attendance on Sunday, bolster the membership role, get more people into small groups or expand the budget... The fundamental goal is to make disciples who make other disciples, to the glory of God. We want to see people converted... followed up and established as mature disciples of Jesus; and... to be trained in knowledge, godliness and skills so that they will in turn make disciples of others.”

Marhsall & Payne  
*The Trellis and the Vine* p. 152

“In most of the churches we know and visit, the problem is that there is not nearly enough one-to-one personal work happening. Structured activities and group events have taken over, and those on the pastoral team spend their time organizing and managing, rather than chasing and discipling and training people... The focus has shifted away from individuals and their growth as disciples, to activities and events and growth in numbers.” (*The Trellis and the Vine*, p. 153)

growth by addition					growth by multiplication				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	4	8	16
6	7	8	9	10	32	64	128	256	512
11	12	13	14	15	1,024	2,048	4,096	8,192	16,384
16	17	18	19	20	32,768	65,536	131,072	262,144	524,288
21	22	23	24	25	1,048,576	2,097,152	4,194,304	8,388,608	16,777,216
26	27	28	29	<b>30</b>	33,554,432	67,108,864	134,217,728	268,435,456	<b>536,870,912</b>

# The Master Plan of Evangelism

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[The following materials adapted from the EPCA church planting bootcamp, 2009, assembled by Bruce Redmond, Church Planting Director for the Southeast District.]

*“Are our efforts to keep things going fulfilling the great commission of Christ? Do we see an ever-expanding company of dedicated people reaching the world with the gospel as a result of our ministry? That we are busy in the church trying to work one program of evangelism after another cannot be denied. But are we accomplishing our objective?”*

(Coleman p.19)

## WHAT IS OUR OBJECTIVE?

1. What did Jesus say His objective was while He lived on earth?
  - a. Luke 19:10
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. John 10:10
  
2. According to Jesus, what are the primary objectives of the church?
  - a. Matthew 28:19-20
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. John 20:21
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. Acts 1:8

## WHAT IS OUR STRATEGY?

**Form follows function** (p.20).

*“We must know how a course of action fits into the overall plan God has for our lives if it is to thrill our souls with a sense of destiny. This is true of any particular procedure or technique employed to propagate the gospel. Just as a building is constructed according to the plan for its use, so everything we do must have a purpose. Otherwise our activity can be lost in aimlessness and confusion.”* (Coleman)

3. Write out your definition of Evangelism.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Coleman explains that this book is not a study of Jesus' evangelistic methods, but of His evangelistic strategy, or principles. What is the difference between the two?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What are some strategies we could use as individuals and as church or small group this year to win people to Christ?

## Personal Study 1 – Selection

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*“Jesus’ concern was not with programs to reach multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow.” (Coleman p. 27)*

### IN THE BEGINNING

1. How did Jesus begin His 3 year earthly ministry?
2. Why was this His initial objective?
3. Did Jesus’ earliest efforts at soul winning have a great impact on religious life of His day?
4. So why did He do His ministry that way?

### THE DISCIPLES

5. Look at Paul’s instruction to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2. How is this similar to Jesus’ strategy? Write out the progression of the passage.

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6. How many men did Jesus choose to work with?

*“One cannot transform a world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be transformed except as they are molded in the hands of the Master.”*

*(Coleman p. 30)*

7. What are good principles to use when deciding how many disciples it is wise to work with?
8. Did Jesus have the same relationship with each of the 12?
9. With whom did He share a more special relationship? Why?
10. Does Jesus’ strategy of “concentration upon a few” mean that He neglected the needs of the masses?

*"Though He did what He could to help the multitudes, He had to devote Himself primarily to a few men, rather than the masses, in order that the masses could at last be saved."*

*(Coleman p.36)*

11. What are the names of the 12? (Matthew 10:2-4)
12. What kind of men were they? What do you know about the 12 that gives you insight on their background, personality, occupation, etc.?
13. Why might Jesus have chosen these kind of men?
14. What do you think would be good characteristics to look for in a disciple?
15. Three characteristics to look for are FAT people:
  - a. **F**aithful
  - b. **A**vailable
  - c. **T**eachable

*"One must decide where he wants his ministry to count – in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men [women] who will carry on his work after he has gone. Really it is a question of which generation we are living for."*

*(Coleman p.39)*

15. What person(s) will you place a priority on winning and/or training?

## **Personal Study 2 – Association**

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*"Having called his men, Jesus made a practice of being with them. This was the essence of his training program – just letting his disciples follow him...He was his own school and curriculum."*

*(Coleman p.41)*

### JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

1. Read Mark 3:13-19, the passage about the appointing of the 12 disciples. What does it say is the purpose of the designating of the 12?
2. In Luke 8 and 9 we see at least a dozen experiences where the disciples were able to share with Jesus as they were with him. Read the passage and record the opportunities the disciples had here.

3. Did Jesus spend more or less time with the disciples in the second and third years of His ministry?
  
4. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared ten times before His ascension. (Matt. 28:1-10; 16-20; Mark 16:9-20; Luke 24:13-35; 36-53; John 20:10-18; 19-23; 24-29; 21:1-14; Acts 1:3-9) To what groups of people did He appear? Why do you think this is?

#### FOLLOW – UP

5. Coleman estimates that about half of people who profess faith and join the church eventually fall away (p. 49)? He attributes this to a lack of relational follow up with new believers – a lack of close association with them. To what extent do you agree?
  
6. Jesus very clearly demonstrated the importance of personal follow-up, not only with His disciples, but of others as well. Look up the following verses to see examples of this.
  - a. Luke 19:1-9
  
  - b. John 4:39-42
  
  - c. Mark 10:46-52
  
7. In summary, what is the best way to “follow-up” somebody?

*“There is simply no substitute for getting with people, and it is ridiculous to imagine that anything less, short or a miracle, can develop strong Christian leadership.”*  
 (Coleman p. 49)

*“With Jesus’ ministry, “knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation... One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations.”*  
 (Coleman p.42)

### **Personal Study 3 – Consecration**

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*“It soon became apparent that being a disciple of Christ involved far more than a joyful acceptance of the Messianic promise: it meant the surrender of one’s whole life to the Master in absolute submission to his sovereignty.”*  
 (Coleman p.52)

1. What does the word “consecrate” mean?

2. What does the word "disciple" mean?

*"...no one can ever be a leader until first he has learned to follow a leader."  
(Coleman p.58)*

#### CONDITIONS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

3. What three conditions for discipleship are mentioned in the gospel of John?  
a. John 8:31

b. John 13:35

c. John 15:8

4. Read Luke 9:57-62. What did Jesus say to each of the 3 men who came to Him as prospective followers? What did He mean?

a. V. 58

b. V. 60

c. V. 62

5. What do the following verses tell us about Jesus' commitment to the will of God?

a. Luke 22:42

b. John 4:34

c. John 5:30

d. John 15:10

6. Read John 14:15,21,23 and 15:10

a. What does God say is the way to express love for Him?

b. What act of obedience did Jesus perform that supremely expresses His love? (See John 15:13, Romans 5:8)

*"The cross was but the crowning climax of Jesus' commitment to do the will of God. It forever showed that obedience could not be compromised – it was always a commitment unto death."* (Coleman p.57)

7. There are definitely benefits to obedience. Coleman says, "There would be no development of character or purpose...without it." What are some other benefits to obedience?
  - a. John 8: 31-32
  - b. John 13:15-17
  - c. John 14:21

#### COSTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

8. Read Luke 14:25-33. This passage lays out for us the cost of following Christ (discipleship). What costs are mentioned in the passage?
9. What are other costs mentioned in:
  - a. Luke 16:13
  - b. Luke 18:22

*"Absolute obedience to the will of God, of course, was the controlling principle of the Master's own life. In his human nature he continually gave consent to the will of his Father which made it possible for God to use his life fully according to its intended purpose."*

(Coleman p.57)

*"We are engaged in warfare, the issues of which are life and death, and every day that we are indifferent to our responsibilities is a day lost to the cause of Christ."*

(Coleman p. 59)



Are you willing to “consider the costs” of following Christ? Can you “accept” the costs?

## **Personal Study 4 – Impartation**

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*“That is why he lost no opportunity to impress on his followers the deep compulsion of his own soul aflame with the love of God for a lost world. Everything he did and said was motivated by this consuming passion. His life was simply the revelation in time of God's eternal purpose to save for himself a people. Supremely this is what the disciples needed to learn, not in theory, but in practice.”* (Coleman p.62)

### THE EXAMPLE OF IMPARTATION

1. What does the word “impartation” mean?
  
2. When God gives something to us, it is always with the understanding that we would turn around and give it away. What are some specific things the Lord has us give in response to what has been given to us?
  - a. Matthew 10:8
  
  - b. John 13:34
  
  - c. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
  
  - d. Colossians 3:13
  
3. What is another verse that we looked at that exemplifies the idea of impartation?
  
4. Jesus was the perfect example of giving to His disciples what had been given to Him by His Father. What were some of the things that Jesus imparted to His disciples?
  - a. John 16:33
  
  - b. John 17:13
  
  - c. John 17:22
  
  - d. Matt. 16:19

- e.
- 5. What does Christ want us to impart?
- 6. One of the ways Jesus imparted this self-giving love to His disciples was by embracing what they disdained and rejecting what they valued. What were those things?
  - a. Physical satisfaction
  - b. Poverty
  - c. Humiliation
  - d. Prestige
  - e. Death
  - f. Popular acclaim
  - g. Sorrow

#### THE POWER TO IMPART

- 7. While Jesus lived on the earth, the Father could impart Himself to His disciples through the person of Jesus. How does God impart Himself to us today?
- 8. Read Acts 1:8 again. What did Jesus say would be the result of the coming of the Holy Spirit?
- 9. Besides giving us power to share our faith, what other roles does the Holy Spirit play in evangelism?
  - a. Mark 13:11
  - b. John 16:8
  - c. John 16:14

*"In this light, evangelism was not interpreted as a human undertaking, but as a divine project which had been going on from the beginning and would continue until God's purpose was fulfilled. It was altogether the Spirit's work. All the disciples were asked to do was to let the Spirit have complete charge of their lives."*

*"The very ability to give away our life in Christ is the proof of its possession...The Spirit of God always insists on making Christ known."*

(Coleman p.67-69)

## Lesson 12 – Disciple-Making

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**Big Idea: As disciple-makers, we need to invest in and equip people to start making disciples themselves**

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that the goal of disciple-making is sending people, not keeping them
- Feel – challenged to give leadership and ministry away
- Choose – to encourage and empower someone they have been building a relationship with

**Discussion Starter:**

- **How were you trained and prepared for the job you are doing now, vocationally?**
- **How do you think most jobs at church get done? How much training do most people receive before they are given responsibility?**
- **How did Jesus train and equip his disciples? What were his key strategies to prepare them as disciple-makers?**

**Bible Focus:** 2 Timothy

- Read 2 Tim. 1:11-14 – What does Paul instruct Timothy to keep and guard (vv. 13-14)? [the pattern of sound teaching, v.13; the good deposit, v.14] Where did these things come from? Whose help will Timothy need to faithfully guard this good deposit?
- Read 2 Tim. 2:1-2 – Where should Timothy's strength come from? What is Timothy to pass on? To whom is he to pass it on? Why is this task so important?
- Read 2 Tim. 3:10-12 – How did Paul invest in and equip Timothy for the work he was doing? [through his teaching, example, relationship, faith, etc.]
- Read 2 Tim. 3:14-16 – What is Timothy to continue in? Why can he be confident to do so?
- What is the purpose of Scripture (3:15)?
- What is Scripture useful for (3:16)?
- What are the results of the faithful ministry of the word (3:17)?
- Read 2 Tim. 4:1-2 – What task should be central to Timothy's ministry?

- Read 2 Tim. 4:6-8 – What may have motivated Paul to write this letter? What does this reality teach us about the importance of investing in and equipping disciples?

“Despite the almost limitless number of contexts in which it might happen, what happens is the same: a Christian brings a truth from God’s word to someone else, praying that God would make that word bear fruit through the inward working of his Spirit. That’s vine work. Everything else is trellis.” (39)

Marshall & Payne  
The Trellis and the Vine p. 39

**The Master Plan of Evangelism** (Robert Coleman)

**9. Selection**

**10. Association**

**11. Consecration**

**12. Impartation**

**13. Demonstration**

- “(Jesus) did not ask anyone to do or be anything which first he had not demonstrated in His own life, thereby not only proving its workability, but its relevance to his mission in life.” (76)

**14. Delegation**

- “Jesus was always building his ministry for the time when his disciples would have to take over his work, and go out into the world with the redeeming gospel.” (79)
- “Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do. It is the commission of the church which gives meaning to all else that is undertaken in the name of Christ.” (88)

**15. Supervision**

- “Jesus made it a point to meet with his disciples following their tours of service to hear their reports and to share with them the blessedness of his ministry in doing the same thing. In this sense, one might say that his teaching rotated between instruction and assignment. What time he was with them, he was helping them to understand the reason for some previous action or getting them ready for some new experience. His questions, illustrations, warnings, and admonitions were calculated to bring out those things that they needed to know in order to fulfill his work, which was the evangelization of the world.” (89)
- “He did not expect more from his disciples than they could do, but he did expect their best, and this he expected always to be improved as they grew in knowledge and grace. His plan of teaching, by example, assignment, and constant checkup, was calculated to bring out the best that was in them.” (94)
- “It is crucial that those engaging in the work of evangelism have personal supervision and guidance until such time as they are matured enough to carry on alone.” (95)

**16. Reproduction**

- “Jesus intended for the disciples to produce his likeness in and through the church being gathered out of the world. Thus his ministry in the Spirit would be duplicated many-fold by his ministry in the lives of his disciples.” (97)

- “This is the new evangelism we need...men and women who want only for Christ to produce his life in and through them according to his won good pleasure.” (105-6)

“The wandering masses of the world must have a demonstration of what to believe-they must have a mentor who will stand among them and say, ‘Follow me, I know the way’...Yet we must realize that the kind of energy that Christ needs does not happen by

accident...If we are to train people, we must work for them. We must seek them. We must win them. Above all, we must pray for them...wherever they are, they must be reached and trained to become effective witnesses of our Lord.”(109-110)

“Training is the engine of gospel growth. Under God, the way to get more gospel growth happening is to train more and more mature, godly Christians to be vine-workers – that is, to see more people equipped, resourced and encouraged to speak the word of God prayerfully to other people...” (90)

Marhsall & Payne  
*The Trellis and the Vine* p. 90

### **Group Discussion:**

Last week we worked through the first four steps in Jesus' master plan of evangelism: how he selected certain men, associated with them and built into their lives. Then he consecrated them, calling them to 100% commitment, and as they left everything to follow him, he imparted himself to them. “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one” (John 17:22). Through this gift of himself, and later the Holy Spirit, the disciples would be empowered for ministry.

The next four steps in Jesus' plan included demonstration – modeling incarnational, relational ministry that touched the untouchable and showed God's love in word and deed. Jesus early on began to delegate responsibility, sending his followers out to preach the kingdom and prepare the way for his arrival. Much of his instruction was on the job training, debriefing and supervision of the ministry they were doing. His was no sterile classroom lecture – Jesus' training was hands-on and required the full commitment of his disciples. And all of it was leading to reproduction, when they would be fully prepared to make disciples of Christ, in the power of His Spirit.

- **When learning a new truth or skill, why is it important to practice it? Why did Jesus send his disciples out to teach and heal so early in his ministry (e.g. Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-11)?**
- **What gave Jesus the confidence to entrust ministry to untested disciples (see Luke 10:21)?**
- **After Jesus ascended into heaven, leaving the work to his followers, what did people notice about these men (see Acts 4:13)? What had Jesus done to prepare them so well for the work they would have to do?**
- **How are we applying these principles at our church? How could we improve at this as individuals and as a church?**

“This is what God is now doing in the world: Spirit-backed gospel preaching leading to the salvation of souls. It's his program, his agenda, his priority, his focus, his project... he is gathering a new Christ-centered people as his very own; a quiet, steadily growing profusion of leaves on the great vine of his kingdom.”

Marhsall & Payne  
*The Trellis and the Vine* p. 35

## Personal Study 1 – Demonstration

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Jesus was always demonstrating how to live before His disciples. Coleman points out three prominent habits the disciples could not have missed: Jesus' prayer life, his absolute confidence in Scripture and his focus on winning souls for the kingdom. First of all, Jesus frequently withdrew to pray and commune with his father. This habit was so consistent, they eventually asked him to teach them how to do it (Luke 11:1-11). Jesus' use of Scripture clearly demonstrated its central importance to his life and ministry. And nearly everything Jesus did was for the purpose of saving souls or training disciples. Through their close association with him as their rabbi and master, the disciples naturally picked up these values and habits, simply from his example.

1. What other areas of life can you think of that Jesus demonstrated to the disciples?
  
2. What do the following verses say about the prayer life of Jesus?
  - a. Matthew 14:23
  
  - b. Mark 1:35
  
  - c. Luke 6:12
  
3. Jesus very clearly demonstrated the importance of knowing and using Scripture in life. Can you think of specific instances where He did this?
  
4. What do the following verses say about the benefits of Scripture to our lives?
  - a. Psalm 119:11
  
  - b. Psalm 119:105
  
  - c. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
  
  - d. Hebrews 4:12

*“(Jesus) did not ask anyone to do or be anything which first he had not demonstrated in His own life, thereby not only proving its workability, but its relevance to his mission in life.”*

*(Coleman p.76)*

## Personal Study 2 – Delegation

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*“Jesus was always building his ministry for the time when his disciples would have to take over his work, and go out into the world with the redeeming gospel.”*

(Coleman p.79)

1. How soon after His relationship with the disciples began did Jesus send them on an evangelistic mission?
2. Did He give them any responsibility before that?
3. After that first year, Jesus sent the 12 on their first mission. Before letting them go, however, He gave them some briefing instructions. In a sense, He outlined for them explicitly what He had been teaching them implicitly all the time. Read Matthew 10, and the corresponding passages in Mark 6:7-13 and Luke 9:1-6. What were the instructions He gave and the principles behind them?
  - a. Matthew 10:1; Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1-2
  - b. Matthew 10:5-6
  - c. Matthew 10:8-10
  - d. Matthew 10:11; Mark 6:10; Luke 9:4
  - e. Matthew 10:16-32
4. Much of what is recorded of Jesus' post-resurrection conversation with His followers has to do with the very task of winning people to Himself. Jesus' clearly delegated the work of evangelism to be carried on after He ascended into heaven. Look up the following verses to see exactly what He said.
  - a. John 20:21
  - b. John 21:15-17
  - c. Matthew 28:18-21; Mark 16:15-18
  - d. Acts 1:8

*“Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do. It is the commission of the church which gives meaning to all else that is undertaken in the name of Christ.”*

(Coleman p. 88)

## Personal Study 3 – Supervision & Reproduction

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*"Jesus made it a point to meet with his disciples following their tours of service to hear their reports and to share with them the blessedness of his ministry in doing the same thing. In this sense, one might say that his teaching rotated between instruction and assignment. What time he was with them, he was helping them to understand the reason for some previous action or getting them ready for some new experience. His questions, illustrations, warnings, and admonitions were calculated to bring out those things that they needed to know in order to fulfill his work, which was the evangelization of the world."*

(Coleman p. 89)

### SUPERVISION

1. How would you define supervision?
2. Why do you think it was important that Jesus supervise the disciples as he began to hand the ministry over to them?
3. Yesterday we looked at how Jesus delegated an evangelistic assignment to the Twelve. What did the disciples do after completing the task? (Mark 6:30, Luke 9:10)
4. Jesus then sends out the seventy-two (Luke 10:1-16). After they return, Luke records that not only did the disciples share with Jesus, but that Jesus also instructs them. Read Luke 10:17-22. What different components are involved in Jesus' supervision?
5. Read Matthew 14:13-21, 22-33 and Matthew 16:5-12. What do these incidents tell you about the disciples need for supervision?

*"He did not expect more from his disciples than they could do, but he did expect their best, and this he expected always to be improved as they grew in knowledge and grace. His plan of teaching, by example, assignment, and constant checkup, was calculated to bring out the best that was in them."* (Coleman p.94)

*"It is crucial that those engaging in the work of evangelism have personal supervision and guidance until such time as they are matured enough to carry on alone."*  
(Coleman p.95)



*"We have not been called to hold the fort, but to storm the heights."  
(Coleman p.95)*

## REPRODUCTION

*"Jesus intended for the disciples to produce his likeness in and through the church being gathered out of the world. Thus his ministry in the Spirit would be duplicated many-fold by his ministry in the lives of his disciples."*

*(Coleman p.97)*

1. What does reproduction mean?
  
2. What would it look like to reproduce yourself in the lives of one of your disciples?
  
3. Read John 15:1-17, 26-27.  
Who is the vine? Branches? Vinedresser?
  - a. What is the purpose of the vine and the branches?
  - b. What happens to the branches that do not bear fruit?
  - c. What happens to the branches that produce fruit?
  - d. What kind of fruit is being produced?
  - e. How does fruit last?
  
4. What does Matthew 7:17-20 say about this issue of bearing fruit?
  
5. What does Coleman explain about the primary verb in the words of Christ in His Great Commission? What are the participles?
  
6. Read Matthew 9:35-38.

- a. What was Jesus' response when He saw the crowds?
  - b. What did He tell His disciples to do?
  - c. Why is what He instructed them to do significant?
7. What is the test of any work of evangelism?
  8. What are the criteria on which any evangelistic effort should base its success?

*"This is the new evangelism we need...men and women who want only for Christ to produce his life in and through them according to his own good pleasure."  
(Coleman p.105-6)*

## **Personal Study 4 – The Master & Your Plan**

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*"Everyone has to live by some plan. The plan is the organizing principle around which the aim of life is carried out. We may not be conscious of the plan in every action, or even know that we have a plan, but nonetheless our actions invariably unfold some kind of a pattern at the center of things."  
(Coleman p.107)*

1. What is the plan of your life? Are you aware of one? What is the purpose for which you are driven?
2. Who do you intend to be Master of your life?
3. What will be your mission?
4. Must everybody's method be exactly the same? What should be the same for everybody?
5. What do you want to be remembered for? If you died right now, would you be remembered for that?
6. What would you say is the greatest desire of your life? Does the way you live your life right now reflect that?

*"The wandering masses of the world must have a demonstration of what to believe- they must have a mentor who will stand among them and say, 'Follow me, I know the way' ...Yet we must realize that the kind of energy that Christ needs does not happen by accident...If we are to train people, we must work for them. We must seek them. We must win them. Above all, we must pray for them...wherever they are, they must be reached and trained to become effective witnesses of our Lord."*  
(Coleman pp.109-10)

7. What is your concept of success?

*"It might well be that some cherished plans of our own making may have to be redirected, or perhaps abandoned altogether...In all probability our whole concept of success will have to be reevaluated."*  
(Coleman p.107)

8. Do you think your concept of success needs to be adjusted at all?

*"But whatever the particular form our methodology takes, Jesus' life would teach us that finding and training people to reach people must have priority."*  
(Coleman p.108)

9. Can you identify any stumbling blocks, or things that might distract you from pursuing a lifelong life-style of evangelism and discipleship? If so, what can you do to avoid these pitfalls?

*"The main thing is to help them keep growing in grace and in knowledge...We will need to exercise patience, for their development very likely will be slow and encumbered with many setbacks. But as long as they are honestly seeking to know the truth, and are willing to follow it, they will someday grow up to maturity in Christ."*  
(Coleman pp.113-14)

*"Probably many of those we start out with will think it too much and fall by the way. We might as well face it now...Yes, there will be disappointments. Those who do come through, and go out to project our life into harvest fields, will be a source of increasing joy as the years go by...We are not primarily living in the present."*  
(Coleman p.115)

*"The world is desperately seeking someone to follow. That they will follow someone is certain, but will that person be one who knows the way of Christ, or will he or she be one like themselves leading them only on into greater darkness?"*  
(Coleman p.116)

## Lesson 13 – Church Planting

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**Big Idea: The natural results of disciple-making are new believers, new leaders and new churches**

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that church planting is central to God's plan of redemption
- Feel – encouraged that nothing can stop the advance of the gospel
- Choose – to actively pray for a church planting movement in our city

**Discussion Starter:**

- **How do you feel about change? What is the last major change that took place in your life? How did you respond to it?**
- **Why is reproduction both natural and necessary for all healthy, growing things? Would you say this is also true for churches? Why or why not?**
- **Have you ever been involved in any way with a church plant? Share about the joys and challenges of that experience.**

Church planting is all the rage these days. Most denominations have bought into the critical need in our country for more healthy, dynamic churches – and have concluded that starting new churches is the most effective way to reach people in our ever changing society. You may have opinions about the volume and style of the music, the content of the sermons and the massive investment in marketing, but it has become almost impossible to ignore the church planting movement that is underway both here and around the world.

Now, while the buzz is new, church planting goes all the way back to the book of Acts. As the gospel advanced from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria, the result was new churches. Like a prairie fire gaining momentum, the Word began to spread throughout the known world. Everywhere that people responded to the good news, they were gathered into believing communities, with elders appointed to teach, care for and oversee their growth (Acts 14:23). Yet even as each body grew and multiplied (1 Thes. 1:7-8), the believers saw themselves as part of one united church (Acts 9:31).

“The local church is the only hope for our world. The Church is not a human invention, simply a man-made organization... It is a divine, God-ordained, Christ-commissioned organism created to be an extension of the work of Jesus Christ. Its purpose is to offer salvation, wholeness, healing and transformation to a sin-sick world.”

Stephen Gray  
*Planting Fast Growing Churches, p. 31*

Today we will see three truths from Scripture about church planting:

1. **The church (and therefore church planting) is central to God's plan** of redeeming a people for himself, so
2. **Church planting is not an optional pursuit for some**, but is the responsibility of every believer and every church and;
3. **It is going to take all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people!**

**Bible Focus:** Ephesians 3:6-11

- **What was the mystery God revealed to Paul** (v. 6; and Peter in Acts 10:34-35)? What was Paul's special calling (v. 8)?
- **How has God chosen to make his wisdom known in the world (v. 10)?** ["through the church."]
- How long has God been planning this (v. 11)? **Was the church God's plan B?**

The fact is that God has chosen to reveal his glory to the world **through the church!** As people hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and are joined together with him (Eph. 2:4-6), they automatically become members of his body (Eph. 2:13,15; 3:6; 4:4). It is Biblically unthinkable to be a follower of Jesus Christ and not be vitally connected to a local body of believers – a church! Speaking to division in the local body in Corinth, Paul reminds the believers there that, "you yourselves are God's temple." While there is clear application of this principle for individuals (1 Cor. 6:19), the context here is the corporate unity of the church. Paul concludes that "all are yours, and you are of Christ and Christ is of God" (3:22-23). All believers belong to one another, we are organically and spiritually connected like the parts of a body to our living head, Christ.

**So wherever the gospel goes, the church automatically and necessarily goes with it.**

"Wherever two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matt. 18:20). Jesus made this statement regarding how to handle a brother who has sinned against you. So Jesus' presence and authority, even for church discipline, are promised when just two or three people gather in his name. The size of the church doesn't matter. A handful of believers gathering for worship and instruction, under the authority of qualified elders, is a church. This is what motivated Paul to write so much, and with so much passion, to the churches he had helped plant (or had heard about). The name of Jesus was at stake, and his body would either be built up or torn down.

Scripture is clear that **the church is the key to God's plan** of extending salvation to the ends of the earth. Jesus promised to build the church and guaranteed that it would not fail (Matt. 16:18). In the great commission, every believer is charged to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19) – a command that will result in evangelism, missions and thereby the planting of new churches. So just as disciple-making is not an optional activity for a special class of Christians, so **church planting is expected of all of us.**

Finally, **it is going to take all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people.** Our mission takes us to all nations because Jesus' vision was to spread the knowledge of the LORD throughout the earth (Is. 11:9; 60:3). As Paul became "all things to all men" in order to save as many as possible (1 Cor. 9:22), so we must think like missionaries and find ways to creatively reach out to people of every race, culture, socio-economic status and neighborhood.

**Bible Focus:** 1 Cor. 9:19-27

Paul's concern in this chapter is to establish his rights as an apostle, under the authority of Christ. One right granted to pastors and elders in the early church was compensation for their ministry of the word (1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). As a tentmaker, Paul was usually able to conduct his ministry without depending on financial support, setting an example of hard work and willing sacrifice for the sake of the gospel. So in this sense, Paul says he is free and obligated to no person (1 Cor. 9:19).

- **Though he is free, how does Paul view himself in relation to other people (v. 19)?** What is his goal?
- **What is Paul's strategy to accomplish this soul-winning goal (vv. 20-22)?** What do you think this looked like? How do you think it worked out practically?
- **To what extent was Paul devoted to his mission (vv. 24-27)?** How does this compare to our usual attitude toward evangelism and church planting?
- **What are the implications of this passage for our evangelism and church planting efforts?**
- **What are some next steps we could take to keep the vision of church planting alive in our church body?**

## **Top 10 Reasons to Plant Churches**

10. **Because New Churches are Needed** - most American churches are in plateau or decline, and thousands are closing every year<sup>1</sup>
9. **Because America is Mostly Unchurched** – less than one in five people is in church on any given Sunday (17.5%, Dave Olsen – theamericanchurch.org)
8. **Because America is Changing** – there will soon be no majority culture in most metro areas, and new churches (some multi-ethnic!) are needed to reach the nations coming to our door
7. **Because it Works** - "Planting new churches is the single most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven." C. Peter Wagner<sup>2</sup>
6. **Because we Believe Jesus' Promise** – to build a victorious church (Matt. 16:18)
5. **To Impact our Community** – extending Jesus' love into new areas and among less reached people groups
4. **To Renew the Body of Christ** – with new ideas, new leaders and deeper faith
3. **To Reach the Lost** (Luke 19:10)
2. **To Fulfill the Great Commission** (Matt. 28:18-20)
1. **To Magnify God's Glory** (Eph. 3:10,21)<sup>3</sup>

*"The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for the 1) numerical growth of the Body of Christ in any city, and the 2) continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else - not crusades, outreach programs, parachurch ministries, growing mega-churches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes - will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting. This is an eyebrow raising statement. But to those who have done any study at all, it is not even controversial."*

Tim Keller, "Why Plant Churches", published in *The Movement – Redeemer Urban Church Planting Center e-Newsletter* (February 2002), 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Win Arn argues 85% of America's churches are declining, and another 14% are only growing by transfer, not conversion growth. So only 1% of our churches are growing by conversion growth! Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 32

<sup>2</sup> Evangelical churches less than 3 years old win 10 people to Christ for every 100 in attendance; churches from 3-15 years old win 5 people for every 100; and churches over 15 years old win 3 people to Christ for every 100. Bruce McNicol, *Christianity Today*, "Churches die with dignity," Jan. 14, 1991, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> This list is adapted from Pastor Aaron Wojnicki's "Why We Plant Churches," March 2, 2008.

## Personal study 1 – Church Planting in Acts

The groundwork for the explosive expansion of the early church was already firmly in place by the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit arrived. The Jewish people had long been prepared for the coming of Messiah, so the preaching of the early church was naturally focused on them. Recognized Jewish teachers, like Paul, gained an immediate audience in synagogues that were scattered throughout the Mediterranean. Plus, the 3,000 that responded to the gospel on that day of Pentecost included Jews from all over the place. Many of them became the first missionaries and church planters, carrying this good news back home with them!

Obviously the main character in the gospels is Jesus. In Acts you might guess that the main character is Peter or Paul. But the reality is that the central character in the book of Acts is the Word of God. Different preachers proclaim the Word, and some, like Paul, circle back to visit the disciples they have made. But the Word steadily advances throughout the book, moving from Jerusalem to Samaria, then Antioch, throughout the Mediterranean region and finally to Rome!

### Read it!

Next to each reference in the book of Acts, mark down who preached the word and who responded to it:

Acts Reference	Preacher	Audience
2:41		
4:4		
4:31		
<b>6:7</b>	“And the <b>word of God</b> continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.”	
8:4		
8:14		
8:25		
10:44		
11:1		
11:19		
<b>12:24</b>	“But the <b>word of God</b> increased and multiplied.”	
13:5,7		
13:44,46 13:48-49		
14:3		
14:25		
15:35		
16:32		
17:11		
18:11		
19:10		
<b>19:20</b>	“So the <b>word of the Lord</b> continued to increase and prevail mightily.”	
20:32	“And now I commend you to God and to the <b>word of his grace</b> , which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”	

**Study it!** Acts 13:42-52

- After preaching the gospel in Pisidian Antioch, what was the initial response of those gathered in the synagogue (v. 42-43)?
- How many gathered to hear the Word the following Sabbath (v. 44)?
- Why do you think the Jews were jealous of the crowds listening to Paul (v. 45)?
- How did Paul respond to their abusive talk (v. 45-46)?
- On what basis did Paul redirect his preaching to the Gentiles (v. 47)?
- Who responded to the message (v. 48)?
- How do you think "the word of the Lord spread through the whole region" (v. 49)?
- How did the disciples respond to the increased persecution (vv. 50-52)?

**Apply It!**

- What can stop the advance of God's Word?
- How does this truth encourage you?
- Who do you know right now that seems to be open and responsive to the gospel? How can you make contact this week to proclaim the word?
- How are you experiencing opposition in your evangelism? How do you think God would have you respond to it?



## Personal Study 2 – Conclusion and Calling

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Congratulations! You have finished this workbook, and hopefully grown closer to your Lord and Savior in the process. The concepts in this material are not meant to be learned one time and then set aside, but are timeless principles that can guide us throughout our Christian walk.



We should always maintain the perspective that it's all about Jesus (lesson 1), and it's not about me. God is working for His own purposes and His own glory – we are supporting actors that step into the big story for the briefest of moments. And yet, in His grace, God has chosen to pay the price for our sins through Jesus infinite sacrifice. So we have been transformed (lesson 2) completely by the gospel – the old self is gone forever and the new self is wrapped around us like a holy, white robe. Remembering and resting in the truth of my identity in Christ – loved, alive, forgiven and free – will provide great strength and assurance through the ups and downs of life. It is also helpful to recognize the cyclical nature of the spiritual life (lesson 3). We are never standing still, but are always moving closer to Christ or drifting away from him. Sin can lure us away into the whirlpool of death. But the Spirit will lovingly lead us into fullness and joy if we will walk faithfully with Him.

In a way, knowing God is impossible and will be our focus for eternity. But in another way, there are simple things we can do to know God better right now. We can learn to accurately study His word (lesson 4). We can set aside priority time to meet with him in prayer (lesson 5). We can live in the holiness Jesus has given us, through the power of the Holy Spirit (lesson 6). This is the essence of the gospel – that we can know the Almighty Creator of the universe in a real and personal way!

Even as we reach up to know God, we are moved by His love to love and serve His people. Every believer is a part of the body of Christ and so is called to authentically share the joys and burdens of other believers (lesson 7). The heart of connecting is seeing past the sin we all have on the surface of our lives to help each other see the good God has placed inside of us so we can live it out together. Like the parts of the body, each member has been given spiritual gifts that, when directed by their head and used in concert result in mutual benefit and missional effectiveness (lesson 8). As we discover our S.H.A.P.E. for ministry – the way God has uniquely designed each one – we will be more fruitful and fulfilled and the body will function as it should.

The gospel was not meant to be hidden and protected, but to be passed on and proclaimed all over the world. We are the witnesses God has called to testify to His uniqueness, goodness and glory, declaring to the world, "Behold your God!" (lesson 9). The church truly is the only hope for the world. Our words should be supported by loving actions that demonstrate the reality that God has changed us in Christ (lesson 10). The love of Christ compels us to love our neighbors in both word and deed.

Finally, Jesus' strategy to change the world involved the exponential multiplication of disciples and churches. Just as the early church spread throughout the known world in the first centuries after Jesus, so the gospel and the kingdom has continued to expand as faithful disciples have entrusted the unchanging message to faithful men and women who would in turn train and equip others (lessons 11 & 12). The result of this

disciple-making strategy will inevitably be worldwide missions and church planting movements (lesson 13).

All of these principles of discipleship are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The five habits we have practiced throughout – prayer, Bible study, fellowship, outreach and service – provide consistency and discipline for the growing disciple. And, like the needle on the compass that always points true north, the Holy Spirit will guide and direct our steps as we seek and submit to His leading.



The Word of God will continue to advance, breaking down walls, humbling the proud and lifting up the humble. Nothing can stand against the church that our Lord Jesus continues to build. The only question is whether we will make the most of the opportunities the Lord gives to us – whether we will strategically invest our lives in the kingdom. Our prayer and our confidence is that God is raising up a generation of faithful disciplers who will carry the life-changing message of the gospel to the nations in preparation for the glorious coming of our Lord!

*"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Being confident of this: that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

Philippians 1:3-6